1. How does structural discrimination lead to vulnerability? Illustrate.

Approach – You need to highlight what is structural discrimination and show its linkages to vulnerability with the help of suitable examples.

Introduction

Discrimination is a multifaceted phenomenon, it is in particular about social exclusion as a process. Structural discrimination refers to rules, norms, routines, patterns of attitudes and behavior in institutions and other societal structures that represent obstacles to groups or individuals in achieving the same rights and opportunities that are available to the majority of the population.

Body

- It is also important to recognize that the consequences of rules, norms and behaviors are that some are affected negatively and others positively. Such discrimination may be either open or hidden, and it could occur intentionally or unintentionally. Structural discrimination is about "them" and "us".
- Discrimination on the grounds of people's ideas of ethnicity, religion, gender, race, culture, age, sexual orientation, etc. must be seen from a structural perspective.
- Vulnerable group simply means the group of people who could easily be harmed physically, mentally or emotionally. According to World Bank "one that has some specific characteristics that make it at higher risk of falling into poverty than others" are said to be as vulnerable groups.
- Vulnerable Groups are groups of persons that experience a higher risk of poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and violence than the general population, including, but not limited to, ethnic minorities, migrants, and people with disabilities, isolated elderly people and children.
- Structural discrimination can be hidden in what is perceived as "normal" or "natural". In this way it helps to influence how practices are established and reproduced - often the aim is to be inclusive or well-meaning. It is therefore not just about ethnicity, religion or the idea of race, but also about other minority positions, such as gender or sexuality.
- In India, members of gender, caste, class, and ethnic identity experience structural discrimination that impact their health and access to healthcare.
- Women face double discrimination being members of specific caste, class or ethnic group apart from experiencing gendered vulnerabilities.For example, one of the key indicators of maternal mortality is the MMR, defined as the number of maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births. In India, this is around 113 in 2016-17.
- Dalits suggests a group who, historically are in a state of oppression, social disability due to the discrimination based on their low status on the caste hierarchy. This kind of structural discrimination has led to SC's having lowest indicators on all aspects where their vulnerability further increases.

- The Scheduled Tribes are landless and usually face discrimination. In India, their population is around 84.3 million and is considered to be socially and economically disadvantaged. They are socially, economically & fundamentally isolated. This structural isolation led to their present vulnerability.
- Structural discrimination against these groups takes place in the form of physical, psychological, emotional and cultural abuse which receives legitimacy from the social structure and the social system. Physical segregation of their settlements is common in the villages forcing them to live in the most unhygienic and inhabitable conditions.
- The vulnerability among the elderly is due to an increased incidence of illness and disability, economic dependency upon their spouses, children, and other younger family members, changes in the family structure and characteristics, changing role of women within families and migration resulting from globalisation.
- Further, persons with disabilities face several forms of discrimination. Disabled persons have reduced access to education, employment, and other socio-economic opportunities. About one-third of the disabled population have disability since their birth.
- Migrants and their denial of rights have to be understood from the existing contradictions within and across countries—from skilled and voluntary migrants at one end of the spectrum to the poor and unskilled migrant population on the other end destined to be excluded from the fabric of the host nation/areas.India has a large number of international as well as domestic migrants and Covid-19 has exposed their inherent vulnerabilities.

Conclusion

The fight against discrimination should step out of the courts and into the sphere of education and politics. The State should lead the way by multi-layered activities against structural discrimination. The State is the actor that should create the framework and the general atmosphere of equality through a holistic approach - implementation in all the spheres of public life, regardless of acting within the public or private structures or individuals, and regardless of the ground of discrimination.

2. Empowerment is the best way to address the life cycle vulnerabilities of the girl child in India. Do you agree? Substantiate.

Approach:

Student are expected to write about the vulnerabilities face by girl child in India in first partandwrite how empowermentmeasures are addressing it in second part.

Introduction:

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said on the launch of the expanded BetiBachaoBetiPadhao, "Daughters are not a burden, but the pride of the whole family. For a nation to progress, it is always essential to empower women. Life cycle vulnerabilities of girl child means the vulnerabilities a woman has to go through at different stages of life. There are several challenges and key issues in Indiawhich need to be addressed urgently.

Body:

Life cycle vulnerabilities of girl child in India:

- Girl child in Womb: Indian parent's mentality for Son preferences and easy availability of Preconception sex selection facilities may be a catalyst in the declining child sex ratioand a girl child gets less opportunity to come to the world.
- Infant: In a study conducted by the Centre for Social Research, fear of violence against women is a major cause of female foeticide in India. Also, there is neglect of health care need of girl child in India.
- Adolescent: Educational opportunity is further restricted for girl child due to problems of transportation, patriarchy etc so We have huge disparity in education as female literacy is still 65% as compared to male literacy 80% (2011 census). Girl's enrolment rates in schools are as high as 96% at primary level and Right to Education Act has a clear positive role here, but it drops to 80% at the secondary level (UDISE 2016-17).
- Child marriage: Today there are around 12 million married children in India of which 75% are girls (Census 2011). Looking at the decadal trends between Census 2001 and 2011, child marriage has barely reduced by 2% for girls within the 15-19 year age group. In fact, during that decade, there is an increasing trend in marriage among girls between 10-14 years of age. A CRY study 'Educating the Girl Child (2018)' revealed that more than 95% of parents interviewed knew the legal age for marriage.
- Adult: There is huge economic opportunity gap for woman in work life. As per NITI Aayog, female labour force participation rate is only 26% in India. Further, there is also gender pay gap at workplace for woman. As per data published by ILO gender pay gapin India is 34%. Low Female representation in

Parliament is also shows Political backwardness for woman. There is only 14% female members in 17th Lok Sabha.

- Married: Exorbitant dowry demand is still there in India and it is not limited to rural/uneducated people. Furthermore12% of the female population of the country suffers from repeated pregnancy & lack of nutrition which ultimately reduces their ability to work efficiently. the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in India has declined to 113 in 2016-18 from 122 in 2015-17.
- Old age: Desertion of old women is very high in India.Health care requirements of old ladies are neglected.Violence against old women still factor for worry in India.

Women's empowerment and achieving gender equality is essential for our society to ensure the sustainable development of the country.

Ways to address the address the life cycle vulnerabilities of a girl child:

- Economic empowerment: Economic empowerment increases women's agency, access to formal government programs, mobility outside the home, economic independence, and purchasing power. More formal education opportunities for womenwould have more access to higher wages outside the home; and as a result, it will increase control of her in her own life. Establishing Microfinance institutions aim to empower women in their community by giving them access to loans will make woman an entrepreneur. This can be achieved through various govt measures likeRashtriyaMahilaKosh (RMK), Working Women Hostel, National Creche Scheme etc for economic empowerment.
- Political empowerment: Political empowerment supports creating policies that would best support gender equality and agency for women in both the public and private spheres. This can be achieved by creating affirmative action policies that have a quota for the number of women in policy making and parliament positions. For examples various schemes like Gender Budgeting Scheme, Scheme for Adolescent Girls etc
- Empowerment through Education: It is said that education increaseswoman's self-confidence and also enables them to find better employment and they can work shoulder to shoulder with men. Govt initiatives like, BetiBachaoBetiPadhao, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme etc are trying to address it.
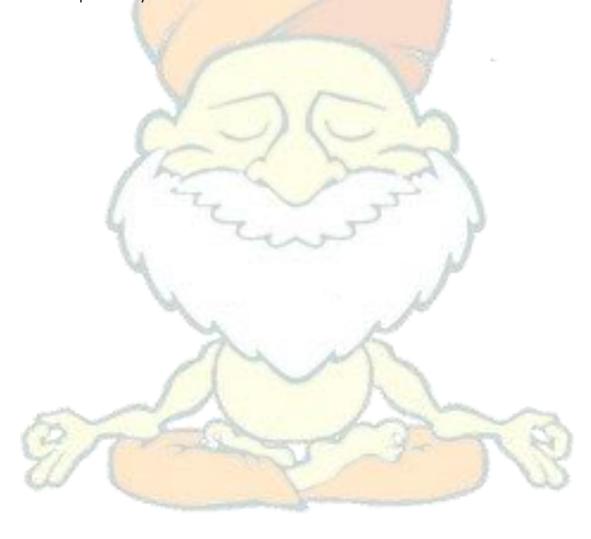
Addressing vulnerabilities through govt policies is not just only way. Society also has major role to play.

- Role of the Society: Many of the barriers to women's empowerment and equity lie ingrained in cultural norms. Many women are scared of disrupting the status of the women and continue to let societal norms get in the way of development.Recent studies also show that women face more barriers in the workplace than do men. Equal treatment for son and daughter by parents is

also boost confidence in woman and improves the mindset of male child towards every woman. Community participation for addressing these are important. Various govt schemes also focuses on Community participation for empowerment. Examples, Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme, Swadhargreh scheme,

Conclusion

It is said when you educate a girl child, you educate an entire family. India is at the brink of change and is blessed with tremendous potential in its next generation of girls. But this potential can only be tapped if their vulnerabilities are acknowledged and concerted efforts are made towards addressing them by the policymakers and other responsive system.

3. Critically evaluate the efficacy of reservation as a tool for the socio-economic upliftment of the backward classes.

Approach:
It expects students to write about - in first part in short write about need of reservation - in second part write how reservation helps in socio-economic upliftment of the backward classes - in third part write various issues created by reservation - in end write way forward.

Introduction:

In simple terms, reservation in India is all about reserving access to seats in the government jobs, educational institutions, and even legislatures to certain sections of the population. Also known as affirmative action, the reservation can also be seen as positive discrimination. Reservation in India is a government policy, backed by the Indian Constitution.

Body:

Need of reservation:
- To correct the historical injustice faced by backward castes in the country.
- To provide a level playing field for backward section as they cannot compete with those who have had the access of resources and means for centuries.
- To ensure adequate representation of backward classes in the services under the State.
- For advancement of backward classes.
- To ensure equality as basis of meritocracy i.e. all people must be brought to the same level before judging them on the basis of merit.

Reservation helps in socio-economic upliftment of the backward classes as follows:
- Due to historical negligence caste based reservation are a political necessity in India.
- Affirmative Action has helped many backward communities in getting education and jobs, which were denied them since long.
- Though Meritocracy is important aspect, but is meaningless without equality.
- To the great extent caste based reservation reduced the gap between upper and lower castes.
- A study to measure the impact of reservations on efficiency, concluded that reservations have not hampered the efficiency of administration, rather they have enhanced quality.
- The example of the Indian railways proves that where SC/ST employees are more in number, the results have been better

However, reservation creates some issues as follows:
- Reservation in state services led to divisions and enmity among government employees, vitiating the atmosphere at workplace.
- Eradication, not perpetuation of caste was the objective of the reservation policy but Caste Based Reservation only perpetuate the notion of caste in society.

- Reservation was introduced to ensure that the historically underprivileged communities were given equal access to resources but irrespective of the economic progress they continue to remain socially disadvantaged.
- Reservation destroys self-respect, so much so that competition is no longer on to determine the best but the most backward.
- Reservations are the biggest enemy of meritocracy which is the foundation of many progressive countries.
- It has become a tool to meet narrow political ends through invoking class loyalties and primordial identities.
- The dominant and elite class within the backward castes has appropriated the benefits of reservation and the most marginalised within the backward castes have remained marginalised.
- Reservation has become the mechanism of exclusion rather than inclusion as many upper caste poor's are also facing discrimination and injustice which breeds frustration in the society.

Way forward:
- Country needs a better basis of reservation which includes the poor and the backward groups and excludes the rich and the dominating sections among all castes.
- The present reservation system requires serious amendments.
- Before extending reservation to more groups, the entire policy needs to be properly examined, and its benefits over a span of nearly 60 years have to be gauged.
- The benefits should flow to the vast majority of underprivileged children from deprived castes; not to a few privileged children with a caste tag.
- We have to address the anger and aspirations of poor families among unreserved communities.
- Along with improving school education outcomes, a more rational model of reservation based on equity and common sense must be envisaged.
- The government's responsibility now is to conduct regular surveys and re-examine the reservation policy in the present scenario.

Conclusion:

- In Ashok Kumar Thakur v. Union of India, Justice Ravindranopined that when more people aspirefor backwardness instead of forwardness, the Country itself stagnates.
- If we would demand more and more backwardness, then it is obvious we cannot move forward, and our progress would ultimately get stagnant.
- The idea of reservation policy should be maintained, and the actual backward classes who are inreal and not fiction denied access to education, job opportunities etc. be benefitted.

4. Examine the factors that make Indian farmers vulnerable. Discuss the measures taken in recent years to address those.

Approach:

It expects students to write - in first part write about factors which making Indian farmers vulnerable - in second part write various measures taken by government - in end write about what further steps government should take to reduce vulnerabilities of farmers.

Introduction:

Indian agricultural sector employs more than 50% of India's population and contributes to only 14% of the GDP. This indicates the drastic inequality in terms of earning when compared to urban population who are mostly employed in either manufacturing or service sectors.

Body:

Following factors make Indian farmers vulnerable:
- Poor policy and Planning: In the past, Government strategy primarily focused on raising agricultural output and improving food security rather than recognising the need to raise farmer's income,
- Absence of direct measure to promote farmer's welfare.
- Declining average size of farm holdings: Increasing demographic pressure, disguised employment in agriculture and conversion of agricultural land for alternative uses, have drastically reduced the average land holding.
- Dependence on rainfall and climate: Indian agriculture is heavily dependent on monsoon and ever-increasing global temperature has made agriculture more prone to extreme weather events.
- Collapsing farm prices: Low global prices have affected exports and the cheaper imports have hurt domestic prices in the country.
- Lack of easy credit to agriculture and dependence on money lenders.
- Fragmented supply chains:
  - Large gaps in storage, Cold chains
  - Limited connectivity
  - Absence of marketing infrastructure
- Lack of Mechanisation: Introduction of latest technology has been limited due to various reasons like accessibility for credit and low awareness.
- Crop production is always at risk because of pests and diseases.
- Shortage of inputs like seeds and irrigation facilities.
- Deficiencies in Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC) Act.
- Profiteering by middlemen.

It has following impact on Indian farmers:
- The above factors have resulted in low income for farmers which is evident from the incidence of poverty among farm households.

- The low and highly fluctuating farm income is causing a detrimental effect on the interest in farming and farm investments and is also forcing more and more cultivators, particularly younger age group, to leave farming.
- The country also witnessed a sharp increase in the number of farmers suicides in the last decades.
- This can cause an adverse effect on the future of food security and the state of agriculture in the country.

Governments measures to reduce farmer's vulnerabilities:

- The goal set to double farmers' income by 2022-23 is central to promote farmer's welfare, reduce agrarian distress and bring parity between the income of farmers and those working in non-agricultural professions.
- In recent years, the Central government has taken various measures like the PM FasalBimaYojana (PMFBY), PM KrishiSinchaiYojana (PMKSY), electronic National Agricultural market (e-NAM), Soil health card, Neem-coated urea etc.
- Agriculture is a major component of Priority Sector Lending (PSL), and the target for bank lending to agriculture has been revised upwards every year.
- In addition to food subsidy under PDS, the government also provides fertilizer subsidy year after year.
- In the budget of 2018 for farmers, the Union budget has announced MSPs at 50% above the production cost.
- It also proposed to launch "Operation Greens" in the agriculture sector on the same lines of the milk sector's "Operation Flood".
- The 2019 budget announced a farm support scheme (PM-KISAN) for farmers owning up to 2 hectares of lands.
- Some States have introduced farm support schemes, examples being the RythuBandhu Scheme (Telangana) and the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme (Odisha)
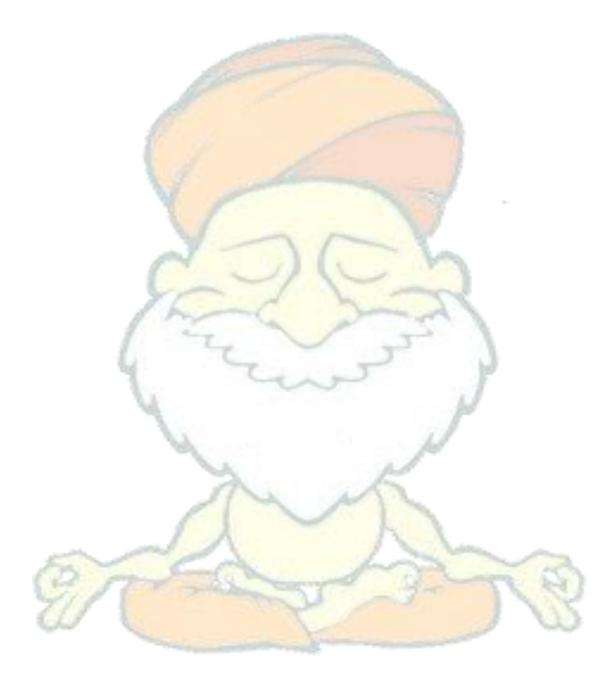
However, government needs to take further steps like:

- Improvements in allied sectors: Many small farmers cannot leave agriculture because of a lack of opportunities in the non-farm sector. Hence, allied sectors like horticulture, food processing, poultry etc. needs to be pushed. For instance, government initiative like Project CHAMAN, AGRI-UDAAN programme, Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters (SAMPADA) etc. are notable.
- Cooperative Farming: In this context, consolidation of land holdings also becomes important to raise farmer incomes. Farmers can voluntarily come together and pool land to gain the benefits of size. Through consolidation, farmers can reap the economies of scale both in input procurement and output marketing.
- There is a need to make a shift from rice and wheat-centric policies to millet, pulses, fruits, vegetables, livestock and fish.
- The creation of a competitive, stable and unified national market is needed for farmers to get better prices.

Conclusion:

The need is to educate the farmer regarding the use of proper quantity of manure, fertilizer and good quality seeds to get desired output of the produce. Optimal utilization of water along with above mentioned elements is essential. Government initiatives with the help of agriculture colleges and universities in association with gram panchayats are crucial for the implementation of the policies.

5. Gender identity is a fluid concept. do you agree? Do you think, Indian society has matured enough to internalise this reality? Critically examine.

Approach:
As the directive here is critically examine it is necessary to cover various angles representing both side views and arrive at a fair judgment based on it. In the introduction explain what does fluidity of gender identity means. In the first half of main body part give your views regarding gender identity as a fluid concept. In the next half give both sides arguments whether Indian society internalised gender identity as a fluid concept or not. A constructive way forward will fetch you more marks. Citing recent examples will be a value addition.

Introduction:
Gender identity is defined as a personal conception of oneself as male or female (or rarely, both or neither). In societal terms sexual identity is a biological term whereas gender identity is a social term. Because of its social nature gender identity is either fluid or non-fluid and accordingly its internalisation varies in different societies and Indian society is not an exception to it.

Body:
Gender identity as a fluid concept:
- Gender identity is not limited to just being a male or female but now it is extended to being a transgender i.e. people who are being identified as trans-men and trans-women, persons with intersex variations, gender-queers, and persons with socio-cultural identities, such as kinnar and hijra.
- Change in gender orientation of a person: A person can be born with any of the sexual identity. However, that person's gender identity can change over the period of time once that person realises the change.
- Conception of identifying work of a person with their gender also makes the gender identity as fluid concept. For instance, pink colorization of jobs is usually associated with female gender. However now a days many of the jobs being done by female gender are now acceptable in the male gender community too. For example, a male can be a nurse.
- The pace of change in current civilisation is phenomenal. For instance, 30 years ago we would not have even thought about giving voting rights to transgender people. However, due to changed perception in our society, we extended voting rights to transgender people too. It indicates gender identity is a fluid concept.

However, the coin has other side too. Still some of the elements in society see gender identity in the context of rigidity.
- For instance, Existence of barrier for development of transgender people in society. No availability of livelihood opportunity, lack of social acceptance make the gender identity rigid. There by creating hurdles for its fluidity.

- In a conservative or orthodox society, less acceptance of third gender makes the process of inclusion difficult. It increases their vulnerability. Which makes the gender identity rigid.
- Still in some sections of Indian society gender based work culture is practised. For instance, in rural areas woman is usually associated with household chores and man is associated with 'masculine works'. It makes the gender identity less fluid.

Indian society is matured enough to internalises fluidity of gender identity:
- In the view to protect the rights of transgender persons, the Parliament passed the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019.
- The Bill prohibits discrimination against a transgender person, including denial of service or unfair treatment in relation to employment, healthcare, Access to or enjoyment of goods, facilities, opportunities available to the public, right to movement, right to reside, rent, or otherwise occupy property, opportunity to hold public or private office, access to a government or private establishment in whose care or custody a transgender person is.
- In a step towards tightening the noose around child sexual offenders and iterating gender identity as a fluid concept, the government introduced the Protection of Children from sexual offences(Amendment) bill, 2019 which is gender neutral.
- A humanitarian socialisation of gender based identities is taking place. For instance, to protect and educate girl child, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme is launched. However, the same scheme will supplement the enlargement of choices for girl students to choose their career.
- For instance, science and technological research is widely seen as a male dominated area. However, now a day's women are also dominating it. For instance, The most recent women to be awarded a Nobel Prize is Andrea M. Ghez in Physics.
- The general perception in a society gets transferred in to policy making through policymakers. For instance, now a day's transgender people are recognised in a society just like other genders. In this light Tamilnadu as a progressive state recognised transgenders as third gender and allotted reservation for them in jobs and education.
- UGC (University Grant Commission) recognized gender identity and sexual orientation as grounds for ragging in 2016.
- Bilingual manual, 'A Teacher's Guide To Gender Non-conforming Students', (that gives some insight about what is sexual orientation, gender identity, why some children are different from others, how to identify a gender non conforming child) was distributed free of cost in Tamilnadu schools.
- Honourable supreme court also granted a permanent commission to women in army which is a right step in the direction of giving equal parity to women with men. It clearly shows that gender identity as a fluid concept is acceptable in Indian society.
- Media, Cinema's represent the perception of society. In this light we can see a clear shift in presentation of transgender in a movie. For instance, recent

Laxmi bomb a bollywood movie and Jayjaykar movie in Marathi film industry showed the life of transgenders and made statements through the movies that, transgender are also same as that of other genders. If given an opportunity they can also play a pivotal role in the development of society.

- In section 377 judgment, the supreme court had made it clear that Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees equality before the law and this applies to all classes of citizens thereby restoring 'inclusiveness' of LGBTQ Community.
- Also Navtej Singh Johar & Ors. v. Union of India thr. Secretary Ministry of Law and Justice is a landmark decision of the Supreme Court of India in 2018 that decriminalised all consensual sex among adults, including homosexual sex. Which clearly indicates that gender identity as a fluid concept is somewhat internalised in the Indian society.

Indian society is not matured enough to internalises fluidity of gender identity:
- Stereotyping of gender based identities and gender based roles has made society more resilient towards accepting gender identity as a fluid concept.
- UNESCO with Sahodaran, a male sexual health initiative in Chennai, conducted a community-based study on SOGI-based bullying in Tamilnadu. Which found that, Across India, students are bullied because of their sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), forcing many to drop out from schools.
- Moral Policing by community affects the mental health of a person. Thereby it shows that people are not ready to accept gender identity as a fluid concept.
- Domestic violence against women based on dowry issues and sex selective abortion is still prevalent is some sections of Indian society.

In this light following reforms if implemented will be a right step towards internalising gender identity as a fluid concept in society.

- Every person must have the right to decide their gender expression and identity, including transsexuals, transgenders, transvestites, and hijras. They should also have the right to freely express their gender identity. This includes the demand for hijras to be considered female as well as a third sex.
- There should be a special legal protection against this form of discrimination inflicted by both state and civil society which is very akin to the offence of practicing untouchability.
- A comprehensive sex-education program should be included as part of the school curricula that alters the heterosexist bias in education and provides judgement-free information and fosters a liberal outlook with regard to matters of sexuality, including orientation, identity and behavior of all sexualities.
- Vocational training centers should be established for giving the transgender new occupational opportunities.

- The Press Council of India and other watchdog institutions of various popular media (including film, video and TV) should issue guidelines to ensure sensitive and respectful treatment of these issues.

Conclusion:

It is an open secret that nobody selects their own identity based on gender. It's the society which practices this differentiation. However, gender identity due to its fluidity has changed the structure of society to a larger extent. However still miles to go to achieve parity for all based on their gender identities as Indian society is in transition stage. Necessary steps in the right direction will ensure Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas.