1. What are the historical factors responsible for the prevalence of inequalities in the Indian society? Discuss.

Approach:

Question is asking you to discuss so you have to discuss in detail and cover all dimensions comprehensively.

Introduction:

At the national level, inequality is broadly found to have risen in India between 1983–2012, particularly in the early 2000s. However, this has happened at differing degrees depending on the dimension being considered and the measurement method employed. The Cambridge dictionary describes inequality as "the unfair situation in society when some people have more opportunities, etc. than other people". The united nation describes it even more simply as "the state of not being equal, especially in status, rights and opportunities". While the term itself is quite vast and has various interpretations, for the purpose of simplicity, the two large umbrellas under which we can classify inequality would be economic inequality and social inequality. Both these categories are deeply intertwined and inequality in one often affects the inequality in another.

Body:

THE HISTORICAL FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PREVALENCE OF INEQUALITIES IN THE INDIAN SOCIETY

There was a perceptible increase in inter- and intra-regional inequality in India during the reform period. This inequality was evident, not only in income terms, but also in terms of health and access to education. This section discusses some historical factors which might be responsible for the increase in inequality in India:
- Historically, the caste system classified people by their occupation and status. Every caste was associated with an occupation, which meant that persons born into a particular caste were also 'born into' the occupation associated with their caste – they had no choice.
- Inequality, discrimination and exclusion mean were brought home to even the most privileged Indians at the hands of the British colonial state. Such experiences were, of course, common to the various socially discriminated groups such as women, Dalits and other oppressed castes and tribes.
- An important element of the economic reform process adopted in India was the belief that a high fiscal deficit level was responsible for the 1991 crisis, and the deficit should therefore be brought down to a certain pre-determined target. However, over the 1990s, many policies which had contributed to this rural development were reversed. Central government expenditure on rural development schemes like agricultural programs, rural employment programs and anti-poverty schemes were cut. This had a

negative effect on rural poverty and employment generation during the 1990s. All these created a sharp rise in inequality.

- Prolonged experience of discriminatory or insulting behaviour often produces a reaction on the part of the excluded who then stop trying for inclusion. For example, 'upper' caste Hindu communities have often denied entry into temples for the 'lower' castes and specially the Dalits.
- One of the reasons behind the increased income inequality observed in India in the post-reform period has been the stagnation of employment generation in both rural and urban areas across the states. Open unemployment increased in most parts of the country, and the rate of growth of rural employment hit an all-time low.
- A number of policies adopted during the reform period essentially increased the level of inequality in India. Liberalization of trade helped some sectors where India was internationally competitive, but it also negatively affected the other sectors.
- Opening up the economy and financial sector liberalization also had major negative consequences for weaker sections of the population. Th e introduction of prudential norms for private and public sector banks and the Basle NPA benchmark made wary banks avoid lending to borrowers in agriculture and to small enterprises. As a result, credit flows to agriculture and to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) went down drastically in recent years. Th is reinforced the problems faced by these sectors due to trade liberalization and the complete removal of quantitative restrictions on imports.

Conclusion:

The Coronavirus pandemic has been the world's worst public health crisis in a hundred years. It triggered an economic crisis comparable in scale only with the Great Depression of the 1930s. India introduced one of the earliest and most stringent lockdowns in the face of the pandemic; the enforcement of the lockdown brought the economy to a standstill triggering unemployment, hunger, distress migration and untold hardship in its wake. The rich were able to escape the pandemic's worst impact; and while the white- collar workers isolated themselves and worked from home, a majority of the not-so-fortunate Indians lost their livelihood hence India needs to grow first before it can distribute. Otherwise, it can get stuck in a low-income equilibrium.

2. How are social media platforms changing societal norms and values? Explain with the help of suitable examples.

Approach:

Question is very straight forward in its approach students are expected to write about role of social media platforms in changing societal norms and values and explanation with appropriate use of examples as demanded by the question explicitly.

Introduction:

Social norms are the rules governing acceptable behaviour within a group. Society is governed by social norms, however, the law has yet to catch up to the speed at which the Internet—and particularly social media—has developed. Prior research suggests that social media influences through two effects: the individual or direct effect (private) or the social or indirect effect (public). In the individual effect, media information about new norms may persuade individuals to accept them. In the social effect, the information creates common knowledge of a norm and enhances social coordination as individuals more readily accept the information if they believe others have also accepted it. Platforms like facebook, twitter, watsapp Instagram etc have played a big role in influencing individuals and groups in order to bring a change in the collective as well as individual behaviour.

Body:

How social media platforms change societal norms and values-

- The traditional social norm of Privacy is completely changed, people aren't worrying to post confidential Information because of the LIKE-Hunger or Peer pressure or both. Also values of empathy and compassion have become redundant eg filming road accident victims rather than helping them has been one of the most ill effects of social media platforms. Recently a fight between two groups in Bagpat uttarpradesh was filmed by people watching them rather than helping them to end fight this incident was highlighted by every media group all around the world. This shows lack of good samaritanship and role of social media in it.
- Soocial norm of face to face meetings have been completely changed people prefer texting and virtual meetings rather than face to face meetings thus creating overall change in the values of weness, brotherhood etc found mostly among young people.
- Social media has created a new breed of 'influencers' – social media users with established credibility in a specific industry,These influencers typically have a larger audience and often persuade others through their content. It is through these influencer profiles, a recentralization of corporate influence was discovered. Companies are investing in influencers to generate content that can shift social norms.

- Social movements have been tied to the Internet as a space for launching or reinforcing their activities and interactions, and the Internet has been found in many cases to be useful to achieve their objectives, especially emphasizes the potential influence of people coming together in digital social networks and forming against government and corporations which formerly controlled channels of communication. These networked social movements born in the digital age have power because they are autonomous, free from institutional control, and operate in different venues, such as online as well as offline social networks and public space. Yellow vest movements in France, recent toolkit case in India.

- Social media has altered the way people generally vote or buy. The recent Cambridge Analytica scandal of 2016 US elections is the best example. Recent Hook-up apps are changing the whole fabric of relationship norms like the way they meet, the course of relation, etc.

- Parents generally spend some time on their children's academics and growth. Now both of them are busy on social media, leading to neglect of child behaviour in crucial formative years.

- According to a survey an individual was willing to give a wrong answer just to conform to the majority view. This explains the impact of fake news online, which contributes to a polarised society. People are lacking Pure judgments, trying to imitate the group leading to a severe value crisis in the society. The trolling of women has brought to the fore the disturbing reality of online violence and abuse women face in India. Exposure of hatred to children at a young age because of cyber bully in New ethical issues are emerging because of privacy concerns, social injustice and ignorance, effects on family values etc.

Conclusion:

Social media is an open road, with bumps and turns all in our way. Its use is inevitable in this digital world, so protecting oneself from its Negativity and focussing more on real-life than our social life is the best way ahead.

3. What role have caste based political parties played in Indian politics? Have their activities and movements led to real upliftment and empowerment of the caste groups represented by them? Critically examine.

Approach

The candidate needs to discuss the role of caste based political parties in Indian politics in the first part of the answer while in the second part, the candidate should critically examine the real effect of these parties on the upliftment and empowerment of the caste groups they represent.

Introduction

The caste system is a predominant aspect of the social and political structure in India. Caste is a major factor in the structures and functions of the Indian political system. Indian politics is caste-ridden politics where caste determines the nature, organization, and working of political parties leading to prevention of the true working of Parliamentary democracy.

Body

Many of the regional parties, which now represent half of the Indian voters, are associated with a single caste and/or religious community – and this is also true of some state units of national parties. In this regard, the role of such caste based political parties in Indian politics can be seen from the following points –

- Different caste groups have their loyalties behind different political parties and their ideologies. '**Caste values**' and **caste interests** influence a person's socialisation and consequently his political thinking, awareness and participation.
- One banks upon caste solidarity for **occupying and performing a leadership role**. Caste influences the process of leadership recruitment. This is particularly true of highly 'caste conscious' people of some states like Haryana, Bihar, UP, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.
- In India, there are so many caste-based political parties which try to **promote and protect the interest of a particular caste**. The regional political parties, in particular, stand predominantly influenced by the caste factor.
- Strengthen democracy as these party's encourage people's political participation. **Voice to marginalised sections** as they cannot be ignored in the first-past-the-post electoral system.
- All political parties in India use caste as a **means for securing votes in elections**. BSP banks upon the support of Scheduled Castes while the BJP largely banks upon its popularity among caste Hindu and the trading community.
- Caste acts **both as a divisive and cohesive force** in Indian politics. It provides a basis for the emergence of several interest groups in the Indian system each

of which competes with every other group in the struggle for power. At times it leads to unhealthy struggle for power and acts as a divisive force.

- At the same time, it is also **a source of unity** among the members of various groups and acts as a cohesive force like in the case of OBC's across the nation.

Caste based Political parties and real upliftment of people –

- Caste based political parties being a form of identity politics, it important to know that identity politics is an inevitability in democracies. The existence of identity politics is an indicator of the health of a democracy because it means that marginalised sections are making an active bid for a share of power.
- Caste-based parties acquired their political and electoral strength by opposing the 'politics of equal recognition.' Politics of equal recognition promised equal rights and equality between citizens. It was rejected by Dalits and OBCs in favour of the 'politics of difference.'
- The politics of equal recognition was seen as being 'difference blind' and attesting one hegemonic culture whereas the politics of difference recognised the particularities of each social group and the non-assimilation of group identity.
- Over the years, legislative measures like the quota for SC/STs in jobs and Parliament have empowered Dalits or at least a section of them. The caste-based politics for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) may not have ended casteism, but it has led to efforts of empowerment like reservation policies.
- The caste factor is an important determinant of electoral politics in India. While nominating their candidates from different constituencies the political parties keep in mind the caste of candidate and caste of the voters in that particular constituency. As a result of this candidate is sure to get the votes of voters of his caste. This leads to disenchantment with constitutional principles and individual identity.
- The role of caste in the working of Panchayat Raj and other institutions of local self-government has been recognized reality. Caste based factionalism in rural areas of India has been the most major hindering factor in the organization and effective working of Panchayat Raj.
- Caste-based violence often finds its way into politics. The traditional differences between higher and lower castes become vigorous and have turned into a violent and fierce struggle for power in society. The growing terrorization of the lower castes by the higher or even intermediary castes has been becoming a part of rural India's political reality.
- Fragmentation of society and enhanced caste consciousness: Creation of favours in own interests and animosity between different sections of people. E.g. - Lingayat Sect in Karnataka wanting a separate religious denomination tag.

Way Forward –

- The education system should be remodelled on secular lines. All schools must encourage community living by organizing community meals and all students should be included in it.
- School textbooks should be carefully revised. The study material should teach the students that the caste system is made by man.
- By promoting Inter-caste Marriage and by providing special offers for people who do inter-caste marriage can bring changes in the next generation.

Conclusion

There is a close relationship between caste and politics in India as both influence each other. Casteism is the biggest challenge for Indian democracy. Democracy and Casteism are opposed to each other. India has adopted the liberal democratic system based on equality while caste system stands for inequality based on birth. Thus, the eradication of the caste system is the only solution to overcome caste-politics.

4. Is embracing western culture detrimental to India's rich social diversity? Critically comment.

Approach

Candidates are expected first to write about western culture and then critically comment on how embracing western culture is detrimental to India's rich social diversity.

Introduction

Westernization is defined as incorporation of the norms, values and culture of the west into our culture. Western Culture derives most of its customs and traditions from the European culture. With the conquest of European powers and subsequent British rule in India has had a profound effect of western culture on Indian society. Western culture has made its presence in various forms.

Body

Indian Culture, which is one of the oldest & richest cultures in the world with varied languages, customs, beliefs, ideas, taboos, codes, instructions, works of art, architecture, rituals, ceremonies etc.

Let us understand how western culture greatly affected our diversity by homogenisation of traditions, customs, family, respect and love for others

- The interaction in present generation is highly diplomatic considering the financial status and wealth. Indian culture which teaches to be a part of each other Joys and Sorrows to celebrate the moments together and share the grief together maintain and nurture the diversity. But slowly all our value for which India has the pride is vanishing & western culture is taking its place. With homogenisation effect.

- Marriage used to be considered as bonding of the souls which will be linked even after the death; but today marriage is like a professional bond or a so-called commitment to share life without compromising their self-interests. It has reduced to a just procedure whereas days back it was a show of a cultural diversity.

- In India different state have their own tradition in which food and clothes shows various variety and importance. But with the popularity of junk food which cause the health disorder in country hampers the food diversity of local cuisine.

- Globalisation had led to shrinking of Indian culture. People are influenced by western culture even in day to day activities like dressing style, food habits, music etc. The 'McDonaldization of Society' is a case in point.

- The institution of joint family has received very rude shock. The concept of joint families is decreasing the India's diverse festival and rituals.

- Subjugation of the local culture, loss of world diversity, conflict between core and peripheral values etc. For example, harassment against women is blamed

on westernization, diseases due to adoption of lifestyles or eating habits that are not supported by the local climatic conditions.

- The fate of traditional material culture and styles of tribes were to be 'preserved' as museum specimens. Attempts were made to synthesise the customary and the modern laws. In all these efforts, the focus was on modernising the tribals.

Rationalism and scientific education, that fuel modernisation, have their origin in western culture and westernisation is often perceived as a sub-process of modernisation which has benefited Indian and helped in maintaining Indian rich social diversity:

- Modern values like humanism, egalitarianism, secularism have entered Indian value systems. Our criminal law has been reformed. Evil customs like sati ended, Untouchability abolished.
- Concept of welfare state was introduced and thus Governmental activities on welfare measures have expanded.
- Far reaching reforms in Hindu society through social reform movements like the Brahmo samaj etc. under inspiration from the Western educated middle class in India.
- Spread of mass education. Emergence of a educated middle class as the vanguard of the freedom movement.
- The political system, which developed during the British rule, gave increasing opportunities for political articulation to the people of India, especially those who acquired western education.
- We find that the traditional social organisation exemplified by the caste system has undergone several changes yet continues to exist in Indian society performing some old and some new functions.
- Due to western culture influence, sanitation and public health has improved greatly in India. Many western doctors have immigrated into India and have made medicines which have helped reduce sicknesses, diseases in large parts because health care has become accessible.
- Western culture has brought media as well in India. For example, 'Bollywood' which came from Hollywood in America. Bollywood's films now traditionally feature India, its culture, tradition and religion. It helps to interact with each other know each other better and preserve our rich social diversity.

Conclusion

Western culture is not altogether bad, although it has made our life faster but enhanced the technology has also made our life easier and comfortable. We need to give importance to our Indian culture which taught us to live in peace and harmony with other by the way of increasing our tolerance and patience. Many people of other countries are realizing the importance of Indian heritage and are adapting the goodness of Indian culture such as practice of Yoga and meditation, wisdom and teachings passed by the ancient saint etc. The knowledge of Indian wisdom helps human being of any race to enrich their life.

5.Comment on the tribal diversity of India. Is it possible to modernise tribal societies without affecting their traditional values and customs? Discuss.

Approach- Candidate can give some data about tribal population across regions, their significance and issues they are facing. In second part, way forward can be given by suggesting measures to enable tribal societies to be modern in true sense.

Introduction

Tribals constitute 8.6 percent of India's total population, about 104 million people according to the 2011 census (68 million people according to the 1991 census). This is the largest population of the tribal people in the world. The so called "tribal belt" embraces central and northeast India, which extends across the centre of India from Pakistan in the west to Bangladesh and Myanmar in the east. The belt is home to 81 million indigenous people, whose ancestors may have inhabited India before Aryan invaders, the ancestors of Hindus, arrived around 1500 B.C.

Body

Tribal diversity of India

- Home to the largest tribal population in the world, India has the privilege of hosting a variety of truly colourful, indigenous, equally vibrant and culturally rich tribal people whose lifestyles, culture, religious beliefs, traditions, rituals, dressing, food, language are so diverse that they represent an anthropological wealth of heritage.
- They comprise a substantial minority population of India, making up 104.2 million people, according to the 2011 census. Adivasi societies are particularly prominent in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, West Bengal, and Northeast India, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The Scheduled Tribes are notified in 30 States/UTs under article 342 of constitution and the number of individual ethnic groups, etc. notified as Scheduled Tribes is 705.
- 89.97% of them live in rural areas and 10.03% in urban areas. The decadal population growth of the tribals from Census 2001 to 2011 has been 23.66%. The sex ratio for the general population is 940 females per 1000 males and that of Scheduled Tribes 990 females per thousand males.
- The Gond comprise the largest tribal group of India with a population exceeding 12 million. Linguistically, the Gond belong to the Gondi–Manda subgroup of the South Central branch of the Dravidian language family.

What are the main issues facing tribals?
- Education- Language The medium of instruction in schools is one of the most important obstacle.
- Economic condition prevents the parents from sending their children to school, parents prefer their children to help them in their work and

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supplement their income. Availability of teachers in remote tribal areas is a big recurring problem.

- Location of villages – The schools located in villages is a barrier for tribal students who live in far flung areas with absolutely no access to transportation.
- Many of the tribal areas are facing security concerns like LWE and Insurgency.
- The influx of outsiders has created tensions. The RIIN of Nagaland is a case in point.
- Due to exploitation of middlemen may tribes are abandoning their handicrafts e.g. weaver tribes of Andhra Pradesh.
- Companies Indian and foreign are often found in violation of the Benefit sharing clauses of Biodiversity Act.

What can be done?

Economy and Entrepreneurships:
- Their knowledge of ancient herbs, plants and other natural products is tantamount to that of an expert. These skills that were once a part of their tradition have now become a means for not only their livelihood but an active contribution to furthering India's economic growth.
- Mendha Lekha, a tribal village situated in Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra, has a successful bamboo economy. The entire village, comprising 450 people belonging mainly to the Gond tribe, works together in cultivating bamboo as raw material for the paper industry. The villagers make profits in crores, and are using the money for several development and social welfare
- In Kerala, tribes have been collecting and selling wild honey for years. According to a report by Agriculture Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) 38, 177.08 metric tonnes of honey, worth 705.87 crores was exported in 2015-2016. This can be increased to other areas also.

Art and Culture:
- Tribal handicrafts are coveted around the world, for the precision, and effort with which each piece is created. Their age-old traditions have cultivated a generation of artisans who have honed their craft to contribute not only to the domestic market but India's exports as well.
- Dhokra Damar tribes of West Bengal and Odisha are the creators of Dhokra technique, which has been used to create metal artefacts. Each year, handicrafts are exported to at least 100 countries around the world.
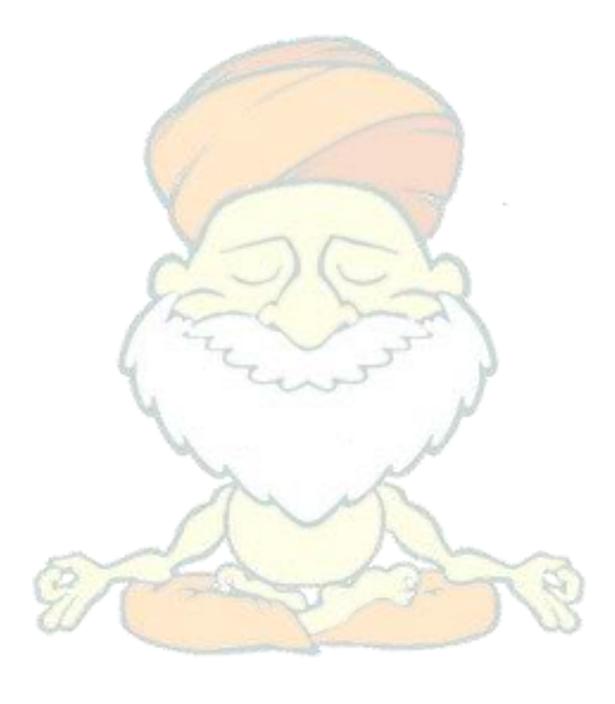
Knowledge of medicinal plants:
- Tribals from Maharashtra collect medicinal plants and process them to sell in domestic and international markets. Tribes india, website of tribal ministry, earns in crores by selling online products.

Conclusion

India is blessed with such a tribal diversity that it is an asset of our cultural heritage. Our so called concepts of modernity cannot be justified to make their lives better. For

example tribal sex ratio is way better that general population, this shows they are way more progressive in their thought and actions. The efforts has to be in direction to create such an environment where no person from tribal background miss on any opportunity and make them capable enough so that they can reap optimum benefits from it.