1. Why is child labour so prevalent in India? Discuss. What are the institutional measures in place to prevent the exploitation of children?

Approach

Candidates are expected to write about the child labour and why it's so much prevalent in India. Then highlight the institutional measures to prevent the exploitation of children.

Introduction

According to data from Census 2011, the number of child labourers in India is 10.1 million of which 5.6 million are boys and 4.5 million are girls. Across India child labourers can be found in a variety of industries: in brick kilns, carpet weaving, garment making, domestic service, food and refreshment services (such as tea stalls), agriculture, fisheries and mining.

Body

Child labour –

- The term "child labour" is defined by ILO as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.
- It refers to work that mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and/or interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

Child labour prevalent in the India due to –

- Poverty is one of the main causes of child labour. Due to poverty, illiterate and unemployment parents are unable to send them to schools, instead the children were asked to help them in running a family so that the poor parents send their children for work in inhuman conditions at lower wages.
- The indebtedness to money lenders during emergency situation find themselves difficult in paying back the debts and interest, as a result the debtors were made to work for money lenders and then debtors drag their children too in assisting them so that the debts could be paid off.
- There are some industries such as the bangle making industry, where delicate hands and little fingers are needed to do very minute work with extreme excellence and precision. An adults hands are usually not so delicate and small, so they require children to work for them and do such a dangerous work with glass.

- For example Kashmir, the carpet weaving industry employs small girls in back-breaking work for fine hand embroidery children are required to maintain the same posture for long hours and strain their eyes often leads to permanent physical deformities and eye damage. In and around Surat (Gujarat), boys in their early teens are engaged in large numbers in diamond-cutting operations which causes irreparable damage to the eyes.
- In the tea gardens of Assam where employment of children below 12 years is prohibited, girls who bring food to their working mothers are encouraged to stay back and help with the work. Children, mostly boys, have an important role to play in mining operations. While men do the digging inside the pits, boys carry coal to the surface.
- An expectation that children should contribute to the socio-economic survival of the family and community, as well as the existence of large families, contribute to the prevalence of child labour. Children mostly take up family's traditional work from an early age. For instance, a Goldsmith's son takes to gold-smithery, or a carpenter's child takes up carpentry from an early age.
- There is a strong correlation between India's differentiated social structure and child labour. The majority of child labourers in India belong to the so called lower castes, nomadic, tribal and Muslim religious minority.
- Due to large unorganised sector in India Child labour can be easily spotted and hired as cheap labour and fast workers in tea shops, dhabas, small shops, and as personal servants and errand boy. After the unorganised agriculture sector, it is the unorganised, informal sector which is the biggest child labour employer.

Institutional Measures in place to prevent exploitation of the children –

- No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or in any hazardous employment Article 24.
- The two Core Conventions directly related to child labour are that of ILO Convention 138 (Minimum age convention) and 182 (Worst forms of Child Labour Convention). India has ratified both the Core Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions.
- Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 to prohibit the engagement of children in some employment and to regulate the conditions of work of children in certain other employment.
- The government has launched a dedicated pencil platform viz. pencil.gov.in to ensure effective enforcement of child labour laws and end child labour.
- Many NGOs like Bachpan Bachao Andolan, ChildFund, CARE India, Talaash Association, Child Rights and You, Global march against child labour, RIDE India, Child line, Kailash Satyarthi Children Foundation etc. have been working to eradicate child labour in India.

Conclusion

There are many laws and regulatory departments for child labour, yet it is ineffective in controlling ongoing child labour. This is possible only when there is a cooperation of all the sections of the society and the law enforcement agencies and by removing or minimizing the causes of child labour. The main thrust should be on controlling the population of the country, education of the children and providing sufficient funds for rehabilitation.

2. Homelessness is a critical challenge in urban India Comment. What are the vulnerabilities faced by homeless people? Is there any mechanism for the welfare of the homeless? Examine.

Approach

Candidate is expected to define homelessness, severity of problem in urban setting and problems faced by homeless people. With the help of some examples and government schemes a way forward can be suggested for making urban spaces more accommodative and inclusive.

Introduction

India has a population of 1.3 billion and is the second most populated country in the world. While it has a booming economy and democratic government, it has nonetheless struggled with containing its population growth and maintaining an equal distribution of wealth. India's GDP is worth $2.8 trillion, but so many remain side-lined by their country's overpopulation and are struggling to find a roof over their heads.

Body

India is the second most unequal country in the world, with 55 percent of income going to the top 10 percent of its population. Since India's population increased exponentially, many cities ran out of space to contain the growing population. According to the Homeless World Cup, there were about 1.8 million homeless individuals living in India as of 2019.

Homelessness and urban India –

- Homelessness is a major issue in urban India. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights defines 'homeless' as those who do not live in a regular residence due to lack of adequate housing, safety, and availability.
- India defines 'homeless' as those who do not live in Census houses, but rather stay on pavements, roadsides, railway platforms, staircases, temples, streets, in pipes, or other open spaces. There are 1.77 million homeless people in India, or 0.15% of the country's total population, according to the 2011 census consisting of single men, women, mothers, the elderly, and the disabled.
- Homelessness is in part a direct result of families migrating from rural to urban cities and urbanization. Migration to urban areas can occur for a variety of reasons ranging from loss of land, need for sustainable employment, lack of clean water and other resources.
- Once reaching cities, homeless attempt to create shelters out of tin, cardboard, wood, and plastic. Slums can provide an escape, yet individuals

often cannot afford them. Homeless individuals may experience abuse, maltreatment and lack of access to schools and healthcare.

- Policymakers attribute the following factors as the main causes of homelessness: drug abuse, mental illness, relationship failures, and domestic abuse. These place responsibility and blame directly on the homeless. Policies related to 'deinstitutionalization of care for mentally ill people and subsequent abandonment of a family member with mental illness by the family' have also increased the number of people living without a roof over their heads.

Challenges faced by homeless people –

- One challenge the homeless face is the inaccessibility to shelters. Although shelters are available for the homeless in certain cities, many homeless people choose to not utilize them and live on the streets instead due to various different reasons. One reason is that homeless individuals who are affected by mobility issues cannot access them and are unsure about how shelters function.
- Another is that sometimes shelters are located in unreachable areas and have "camouflaged architecture and poor layouts of the interiors". Shelters often lack funding and resources to make them more attractive for the homeless population. Shelters also demand a small fee per night, immediately rendering them inaccessible for many homeless.
- Another challenge faced by the homeless is exposure to extreme weather in summer and winter. A study found that between January 2005 and December 2009, seven homeless individuals passed away every day in Delhi. Their deaths were not recorded by the police and they also did not receive a funeral.
- Homeless people also suffer from bad health and extremely limited access to medical facilities. Some of the reasons include: lack of proper identity documents required by medical facilities, cost, and inclination of health care providers to outright reject them.

What can be done?

- The Government of India has formed new policies for affordable housing and shelters in urban areas in the past few decades. However, shelters provide a temporary solution as they are not permanent and do not replace the right to housing.
- To improve infrastructures in slums, the government mandated a new mission known as the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission. Pradhan mantri awas yojana urban can be an effective step to tackle this challenge.
- Government's dream project is providing housing for all by 2022. the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), plans to provide homes to 18 million households in urban India. The Government has approved only 1.88 million

urban houses and roughly 103,000 have been built till last april. The progress of PMAY's implementation has been disappointing. Accelerating the implementation can be a way forward.

- Improving land property records, utilising vacant houses (in India in 2011 50 million houses were vacant), providing no eviction guarantee to individuals who don't have legal titles and providing them security tenure.
- Including housing for all in priority list of urban planning, for example MHADA was instrumental in providing shelter to many homeless at affordable prices as the implementation is done by local bodies.

Conclusion

India aims to become a fastest growing economy in next decade, for that we need urban centres as engines of growth, more than 45% of India's population will be living in urban areas in 2030, for that we have to create a flexible mechanism and create infrastructure at lightning speed for homeless. Shelter is a basic human right, denying the same is denying human dignity. India can utilise its human resources only if we provide them with basic shelter.

3. What are the typical life cycle vulnerabilities of a girl child in India? Discuss the schemes and programs meant for addressing those vulnerabilities.

Approach

Since the question is asking you to discuss, it necessitates a debate where reasoning is backed up with evidence to make a case for and against an argument and finally arriving at a conclusion.

Introduction

Like most cultures across the world, Indian society has deeply entrenched patriarchal norms and values. Patriarchy manifests itself in both the public and private spheres of women's lives in the country, determining their 'life chances' and resulting in their qualitatively inferior status in the various socio-economic spheres. It permeates institutions and organisations and works in many insidious ways to undermine women's right to dignified lives. There are similarities in women's lived experiences due to such gendered existences.

Body

The typical life cycle vulnerabilities of a girl child in India –

- The discrimination against the girl child is systematic and pervasive enough to manifest in many demographic measures for the country. For the country as a whole as well as its rural areas, the infant mortality rate is higher for females in comparison to that for males.
- Usually, though not exclusively, it is in the northern and western states that the female infant mortality rates are higher, a difference of ten points between the two sex specific rates not being uncommon.
- The infant mortality rate is slightly in favour of females in the urban areas of the country (as a whole) but then, urban India is marked by greater access to abortion services and unwanted girl children often get eliminated before birth.
- It has been commented in the context of women's health that sustainable well-being can be brought about if strategic interventions are made at critical stages.
- The life cycle approach thus advocates strategic interventions in periods of early childhood, adolescence and pregnancy, with programmes ranging from nutrition supplements to life skills education. Such interventions attempt to break the vicious intergenerational cycle of ill health.
- The vulnerability of females in India in the crucial periods of childhood, adolescence and childbearing is underscored by the country's sex wise age specific mortality rates. From childhood till the mid-twenties, higher proportions of women than men die in the country. In rural India, higher proportions of women die under thirty.

- Health is socially determined to a considerable extent. Access to healthcare, is almost fully so. This being so, the 'lived experiences' of women in India are replete with potential risk factors that have implications for their lives and well-being.
- The multiple roles of household work, child rearing and paid work that women carry out has implications for their physical and mental health.
- In recent years, studies on domestic violence in the country have systematically debunked the myth of the home as a safe haven. Violence against women in India cuts across caste, class and other divides. In general, women in India are restricted in matters of decision making, freedom of mobility and access to money, though wide variations exist depending on the socio- demographic context.

The schemes and programs meant for addressing those vulnerabilities: The following policy recommendations are offered to address the situation –

1. Adopt comprehensive and gender sensitive primary healthcare to address women's diverse health needs and to overcome the many limitations that they experience in accessing healthcare.
2. Strengthen public healthcare. For the poor and the marginalised, the public sector is the only sector that can potentially provide qualified and affordable care. In the rural interiors of the country, it is usually the only sector having qualified personnel.
3. Regulate the private sector. For a sector that is the dominant provider of curative services in the country, it is indeed surprising that it operates with so little accountability. The private sector should be subject to controls with regards to the charges levied, minimum acceptable standards for practice, geographical dispersal of services, etc that would make access to the sector more equitable for groups across this vast country. Equitable distribution of services is a non-negotiable and will greatly facilitate access.
4. Make the health systems gender sensitive. Health systems should be sensitised to the multiple and interrelated health needs of women and the gendered nature of their existences. A gender sensitive health system will not only encourage women to seek care but will also respond to their needs appropriately.
5. Institute community health insurance schemes that would be bulwarks against catastrophic health events. It is imperative that such schemes be need based and cover vulnerable groups in the country and not be a privilege of a few. In a society where resources can be so inequitably distributed within and outside the family, it needs to be emphasised that community health insurance schemes should protect the interests of women.
6. Strengthen civil society initiatives that advance women's 'practical' and 'strategic' interests, for the two are intricately intertwined in women's lives.

Conclusion

It is indeed unfortunate that a welfare state, founded on the principles of equality, social justice and democracy should display such inequities in health and access to health care. It is the 'usual suspects'- rural India, the poor, the lower castes (especially the Scheduled Castes), the Scheduled Tribes, the less developed states and regions of India that show poor health status and restricted access to healthcare. In fact, with the considerable weakening of the public healthcare system and the gradual entrenchment of the market economy, differentials among socio-economic groups are widening. Any programme that aims to address women's health needs should therefore be sensitive to such complexities in women's lives being staged on a social terrain of remarkable inequities.
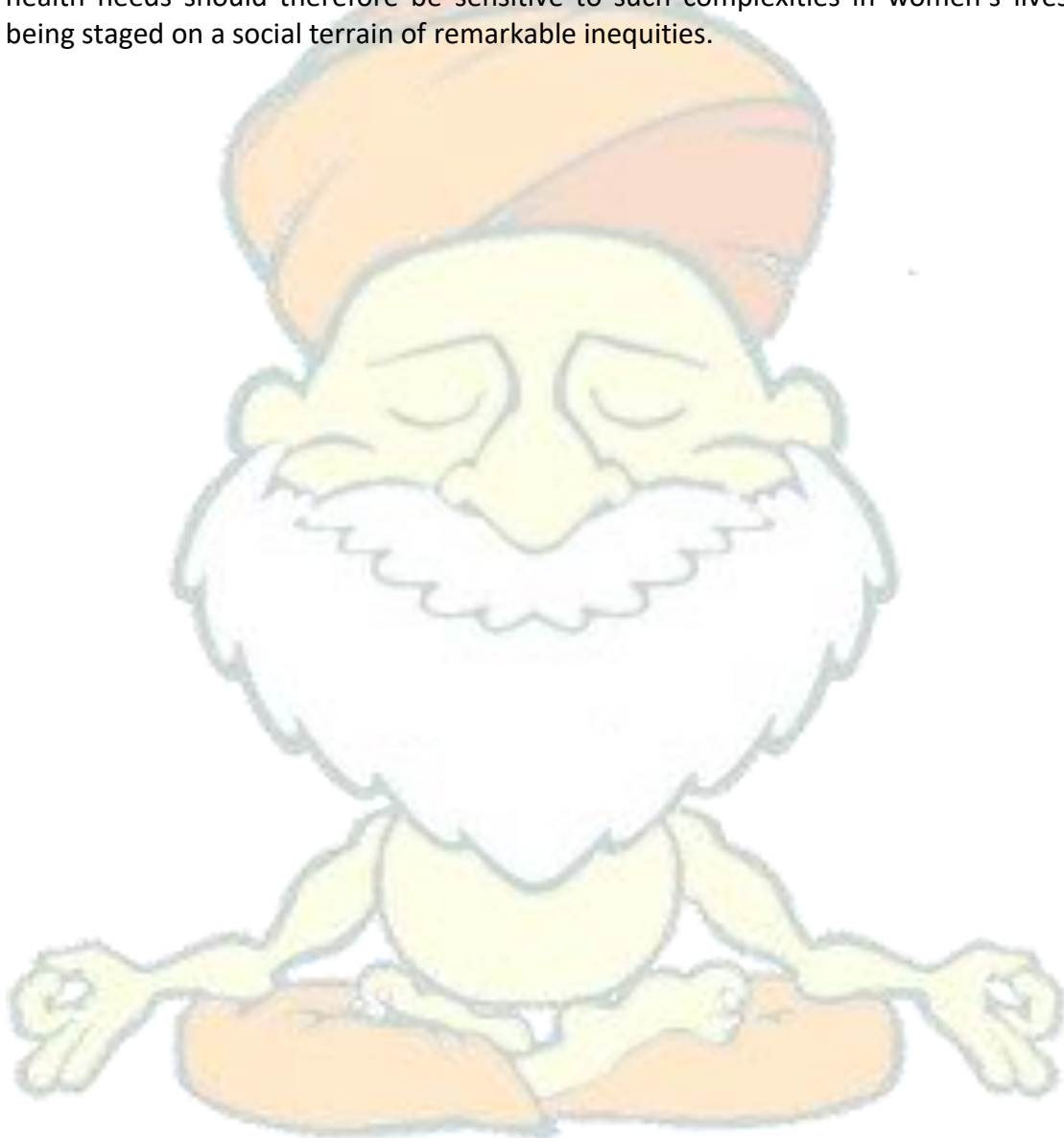
4. India's demographic profile and state of joblessness imparts severe vulnerabilities to the young population. Do you agree? Substantiate.

Approach

Question is straight forward in its approach students are expected to write about the Demographic profile and state of joblessness imparting vulnerabilities to young population in India also it is important to substantiate points with facts and statistics as well.

Introduction

India has 62.5% of its population in the age group of 15-59 years which is ever increasing and will be at the peak around 2036 when it will reach approximately 65%.These population parameters indicate an availability of demographic dividend in India, which started in 2005-06 and will last till 2055-56. According to Economic Survey 2018-19, India's Demographic Dividend will peak around 2041, when the share of working-age,i.e. 20-59 years, population is expected to hit 59%. Also India's unemployment rate in October rose to 8.5%, the highest level since August 2016. Urban unemployment rate at 8.9%, is more than the rural unemployment rate of 8.3%. CMIE findings are in line with the findings of the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey, which had estimated an unemployment rate of 6.1% between July 2017 and June 2018, the worst in 45 years.

Body

Demographic profile and state of joblessness imparting vulnerabilities to young population –

- India has just 2% of the world's landmass and 16% of the global population. Between the Census of 2001 and 2011, the country added 18% more people to its population — translating to around 181 million. It is the second most populous country in the world with an estimated population of around 1.37 billion by 2019.According to the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, India's population is expected to add nearly 273 million people in the next three decades and surpass China's population within the next 7 years.
- Poverty and illiteracy also contribute immensely in the population explosion. In particular, children in rural areas are considered as assets, who will take care of parents at old age, while in poorer families, more children mean more earnings hands. On the other hand, the level of female education has a direct impact on fertility, as it is evidenced that the fertility rate of illiterate women tends to be higher than those who are literate. Lack of education prevents women from having full knowledge about the use of contraceptives, of the consequences of frequent childbirth as well as of their reproductive rights. On the other hand, educated women understand their rights and choices of

contraception, are often vocal against early marriage and choose not to have many children. In India, female (39%) illiteracy was almost twice than their male counterparts in 2011.

- India has the highest number of youth population in the world, i.e. around 28% of the total population. Every year around 25 million people enter the workforce, but only 7 million are able to secure jobs, resulting in huge unemployment rates. Around 18% of the youth labour force is unemployed in the country today, and around 33% of the total youth are not in employment, education and training (NEET), which is highest in the world.

- The unemployment problem is affecting large numbers of young people and a growing number of those have attended school. According to the recently released Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2018, 97% of children in the age group of 6-14 years are now enrolled in school. Many of those who attended school have gone on to obtain college degrees.

- The length of the waiting period for proper jobs and what the young unemployed and underemployed do during that time is perhaps of some significance. 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.

- Some recent surveys show that young people are not very hopeful about their employment prospects. It is not obvious whether their frustration or anger will simply translate into votes against the government, anti-government protests or something else and more. What is clear is that the unemployed and underemployed become available as a 'resource' for political parties and other organisations which are looking to mobilise larger numbers of people for one reason or another, whether for anti- or pro-government protests, ethnic mobilisation or something else.

- In India, where differences based on ethnicity, including caste, language and religion, remain relevant and quite defined, perhaps more than class differences, the resentment and anger of young college-educated people may, rather than turn against the government or the state, instead turn against communities or social groups they perceive as privileged or as benefiting from government policies or even the status quo, including reservations.

Conclusion

There are 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. 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. The policy would be a critical tool to contribute significantly to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

5. What are your views on the draft scrapping policy for vehicles? What are its intended benefits? Discuss.

Approach

A simple and straightforward question where in the candidate needs to give his/her views with regards to the draft scrapping policy for vehicles in the first part of the answer while discussing its intended benefits in the second part.

Introduction

Recently, the much-awaited draft policy on vehicle scrappage was released, which outlined the criteria for defining end-of-life vehicles and scrapping them. This is an important step forward towards building infrastructure for organised and scientific scrapping of old vehicles.

Body

- A scrappage policy is a government-funded programme to promote the replacement of old vehicles with modern ones and is expected to help in the reduction of pollution by scrapping older vehicles as well as create jobs in the auto sector.
- It also refers to the provision of financial incentives to the owners of vehicles to get them to scrap outdated models and replace them with newer vehicles.
- One of the provisions of the vehicle scrappage policy is to mandate fitness tests for commercial vehicles after 15 years. In case of failure to pass the fitness tests, the policy proposes de-registering commercial vehicles, which would then make it illegal to use these vehicles in the country.
- The policy also proposes that all vehicles used by the Central government, state governments, municipal corporations, panchayats, state transport undertakings, public sector undertakings, and autonomous bodies with the union and state governments be also de-registered and scrapped after 15 years from their date of registration.
- But the draft policy also misses an opportunity of designing an effective stimulus programme for green recovery in a post pandemic economy for the sector to achieve air quality benefits.
- Further, there is no stated commitment in the policy towards fiscal stimulus for renewal of ageing vehicles with BS-VI norms or linking with the electrification of vehicles. It places the onus of incentivising vehicle scrapping on state governments, which are already fiscally strained.
- According to a study by International Council on Clean Transportation, in Germany, replacing old cars with newer ones powered with internal combustion engine did not provide much effective emissions gains as replacing them with electric vehicles.
- Therefore, limiting the numbers of personal vehicles that can qualify for incentives and linking their voluntary replacement with electric vehicles can

contribute towards accelerating the target of 30-40 per cent electrification by 2030.

But overall, the draft scrapping policy for vehicles has many intended benefits, some of which are discussed below –

1. The policy is aimed at taking off the roads old, fuel-guzzling vehicles whose roadworthiness may be in doubt and replacing them with new ones in a potential boost to automobile sales and their manufacturers.
2. The post-Budget observations indicated that the broad outline of the policy expects to stimulate investment of Rs10,000 crore and create 50,000 jobs.
3. The policy will help in encouraging fuel-efficient, environment-friendly vehicles, thereby reducing vehicular pollution and the oil import bill as vehicles would undergo fitness tests in automated centres after 20 years in the case of personal vehicles, and after 15 in the case of commercial vehicles.
4. With India becoming an automobile hub, the industry turnover is expected to more than double in the years to come. The policy, it is being claimed, will boost new technologies with better mileage and promote green vehicles, strong hybrids, electric vehicles, and those running on alternative fuels like CNG/ethanol, etc.
5. It is estimated that one crore vehicles will be scrapped for harvested material like steel, plastic, rubber and aluminium used in the manufacturing of automobile parts, thereby reducing their cost by 30 to 40 per cent.
6. The other tangible benefits from the policy are scientific disposal and recovery of waste. Recycle and reuse can contribute towards import substitution and improve India's balance of payments.

Way Forward –

More effective leveraging of the policy is possible if the Government allows GST cuts for replacement vehicles including electric ones, and considers direct incentives for targeted fleet renewal of most polluting old trucks and buses based on BS6 standards.

Conclusion

Clearly, this first ever formal scrappage policy in India is urgently needed to help build infrastructure for safe disposal and material recovery to minimise environmental hazards. But India would be adopting scrappage policy during these unprecedented pandemic times, so it is necessary to leverage this targeted fleet renewal with well-designed central support for post-pandemic green deal.