

1. Discuss the role of women's organizations in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of poverty alleviation and development.

Approach

Candidates can start the answer with giving basic idea about inequality and then straightway address the question with highlighting how woman organisation worked for woman development and poverty alleviation.

Introduction

Women constitute almost half of the country's population, therefore improving their condition in the country can immensely contribute to poverty alleviation. Therefore, role of woman organisation becomes important to fill the gap in such instance.

Body

- Improving Socio Economic situation: The origin of SHGs with SEWA in 1972 came together to find ways to improve woman's living conditions. It can be defined as self-governed, peer-controlled information group of people with similar socio-economic background and having a desire to collective alleviation of poverty.
- Entrepreneurial culture: SHGs have become a vehicle to lift people from below poverty line, generate awareness about welfare and developmental schemes of government, monitor its implementation etc. For example, Lizzat papad promotes entrepreneurial culture among women.
- Aiming gender parity: Beijing Platform for Action stemming from the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995, the prioritization of women's leadership was considered vastly important. Two decades later, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underscored the need and urgency to achieve gender parity in leadership through SDG Target 5.5.
- Financial Independence: Gramin Vikas Evam Chetan Sansthan (GVCS) was founded in 1998 in Barmer, Rajasthan. It is committed to empowering women artisans by making handicrafts a viable means of home-based employment for financial independence.
- Health and Awareness: In 2017, a Mumbai-based non-profit organization, 'SheSays' led by Trisha Shetty, began a campaign, #LahuKaLagaan, which called to abolish tax on sanitary napkins. As the campaign went viral across the country, other organisations picked up the cause. Eventually, in 2018, the 12 per cent tax on sanitary napkins was scrapped by the government.
- Skills and education: Milaan foundation works for an inclusive and equal world for girls. It strives to achieve this through the empowerment of young girls

from marginalised communities with the education, knowledge and skills needed to pursue their dreams.

- Exposure and leadership skills to underprivileged: Ibtada from Rajasthan works closely with government schools to improve the learning levels of underprivileged girls. It also has a programme for young girls to build confidence, provide exposure, awareness, and hone leadership skills.

Acts as pressure groups:

- Sampatlal devi's started a society called the Gulabi Gang with a group of women from her village to fight various forms of social injustice. This developed into an organized women's movement with tens of thousands of members spread over several districts in Uttar Pradesh.
- Nirbhaya Vahini helps to mobilize public opinion and launch a sustained campaign for ban on liquor trade, self-defence training for girls, special protection for women security in every district, and Fast-track court and special investigating & prosecuting wing in every district.

Conclusion

Responsibilities of organisation are huge because women's empowerment plays a catalytic role towards the achievement of transformational economic, political and social changes required for sustainable development.

Q-2-Analyse the impact of rapid population growth on poverty and development in India, what are the potential solutions to address these challenges ?

Approach -

A simple straightforward question where candidates need to write about impact of rapid population growth on poverty and development in India, In second part of answer write potential solutions to address these challenges .

Introduction -

High population growth will have several repercussions like unemployment, poverty, poor standards of living, a larger gap between the rich and the poor, lesser resources, greater exploitation of natural resources. It will have adverse effect on development .

Body -

Impact of Rapid population on poverty -

- Increase in the population results in more family expenses. It leads to rise in unemployment pushing family into vicious cycle of poverty.
- At one end high population growth rate is one of major reasons of poverty in India.

- High population below poverty line add to high level of illiteracy, poor health care facilities and poor access to financial resources.
- Hence high population growth affects the per capita income and makes per capita income even lower.
- Whereas on the other side for poor, one more child means two more hands to work and earn for livelihood of family, and this particular reason make poverty a strong cause for growing population.
- lack of money and proper awareness or education about contraceptive methods is among major causes of population increase in India due to poverty.
- It leads to poor lifestyle and high mortality, particularly among children, which keeps the fertility rates high, due to uncertainty, further increasing the population upwards.
- It leads to rise in unemployment pushing family into vicious cycle of poverty.
- Increased number of people in agricultural families results in decreased portion of divided land among the family members causing lower incomes.

Impact of population on development -

- Water shortages-Already up to 40% of the world's population face water scarcity and the risk of drought. A growing population will put pressure on scarce water supplies and this is a factor behind many minor and major conflicts with countries having to find ways around the shortage of water.
- If this is not addressed soon, the Indian population may become a liability.
- Generating unsustainable waste-We are currently generating non-biodegradable rubbish that we are struggling to process. It tends to end in landfill, causing methane emissions and other toxic problems.
- Problem of Unemployment-Large size of population results in large army of labour force. But due to shortage of capital resources it becomes difficult to provide gainful employment to the entire working population.
- Disguised unemployment in rural areas and open unemployment in urban areas are the normal features of an under developed country like India.
- Pressure on Environment-Population explosion leads to environmental degradation. Higher birth rate brings more pollution, more toxic wastes and damage to biosphere. Briefly speaking, population explosion hinders the economic development.
- Education-The low income of large family dose not afford to provide education to their children. Which results into creating a problem of illiteracy and again none awareness among the class.
- Pressure on food, clothing & housing-A country with fast growing population has to face a serious problem of scarcity of necessary food, minimum clothing & proper housing facilities, which are basic needs of human life. Thus, it affects the life style and results slum areas, starvation etc.
- It is estimated that India is currently producing 25 million job seekers but provides jobs to only 7 million.

Potential solutions to address these challenges -

- A population can be an asset if the youth of the country has access to education, skill development, increased employment opportunities, etc.however, currently, India faces a very high unemployment rate.

- The current government is bearing the burden of providing the access to clean drinking water, houses, cooking fuel, electricity, and healthcare to the whole of the Indian population and is aiming to create a \$5trillion economy. Also, India's landmass is only 35-40% of China's landmass.
- The government needs to play a pivotal role and invest in education, health and creating economic opportunities for young people, which would help us harness demographic dividend.
- This calls for forward-looking policies incorporating population dynamics, education and skills, healthcare, gender sensitivity, and providing rights and choices to the younger generation.
- India needs to invest more in children and adolescents, particularly in nutrition and learning during early childhood.
- India needs to increase female workforce participation in the economy.
- It is, therefore, important to understand that in order to have a better future for all on a healthy planet, attainment of the SDGs is critical.
- Providing adequate education and training to the young population would make them productive, effective and competent, thereby making them key contributors to economic growth.

Conclusion-

Efforts to combat the 'vicious circle' of poverty, rising population growth and environmental degradation are said to require multidisciplinary policies in all sectors. These policies need to be carefully established taking account of the need to achieving sustainable development if the resourced that are available for future generations are to be preserved .

Q-3- Discuss the role of women in addressing poverty and developmental issues in urban areas including through their participation in their labor force and in community level initiatives .

Approach -

In this question candidates need to write about role of women in addressing poverty and developmental issues in urban areas through participation in labor force and community level initiatives .

Introduction -

In economic development of India, its cities have a major role to play. Women can play major role in addressing poverty and developmental issues in urban area through their participation.

Body -

Role of women in addressing poverty and development in urban area-

- Urban areas faces lack of durable housing, overcrowding, insufficient access to clean water, poor sanitation, and threats of forced evictions. Women and girls often suffer the worst effects.
- Sustainable cities and towns support the equal participation of women and men, especially in urban planning and management, as well as governance.
- Under the principles of decentralization, states should ensure that local authorities have the right and the ability to regulate a substantial share of public affairs.
- Over the last few decades, there has been substantial progress in women's access to power and decision-making, but there is still persistent under-representation by women in politics.
- A growing number of urban governance programme and tools have been developed to improve women's participation and empowerment, targeting diverse groups of women—from the grassroots to technical experts to the highest levels of academia and politics.
- To improve policies and programme, governments and urban planners benefit from understanding how gender affects women and men differently as victims of disasters, but also how the knowledge and skills of both can help them and their communities to survive.
- Furthermore, women in the informal economy are more often found working in the most vulnerable situations, for example as contributing family workers.
- Income losses owing to poor health, combined with high out-of-pocket payments in the absence of social health protection, are a major cause of poverty among women who work in the informal sector.
- There is a clear positive relationship between poverty and informality; the poor face higher rates of informal employment, although with some important disparities owing to the fact that employment is an individual-based measure, whereas poverty is measured at the household level and thereby strongly affected by household size and composition
- It is noteworthy that, when poverty rates are compared between women and men who are in informal employment in most developing countries, and more generally in most countries that have the highest incidence of poverty, more women than men in informal employment live in households that fall below the poverty line
- High occurrence of such health ailments often increases the burden of additional care work on women living in dense informal settlements, increasing their time poverty.

Roles women can play in addressing developmental issues in urban areas -

- To facilitate women's involvement, most of the work could be organized on a part-time basis, say four hours a day. A part-time employment option would be attractive for many poor women in urban areas.
- Urban women, on the whole, have greater access to services and infrastructure, more opportunities to engage in paid employment, and are subject to fewer sociocultural restrictions than women living in rural areas.
- However, they do not benefit equally with men in urban environments. They are disadvantaged in income poverty, asset poverty, time and power.

- Homogeneity and limited exposure in rural areas can limit awareness of alternative gender roles discouraging contestation of gender norms and confidence in the possibility of social change, e.g. in the division of labour.
- Urban heterogeneity fosters tolerance of differences, and can erode existing assumptions of gender differences and cultivate support for equality. Increasing feminisation of labour in urban areas has accompanied an informational of labour, but informal sector activities (e.g. street vending) are precarious, mostly unregistered and poorly paid.
- Urban environments provide advantages for education compared to rural areas, but there are barriers particularly for girls from poor urban households. In slums, after-school study is often limited by lack of space, peace, light and other infrastructure.
- Women can increase their empowerment and agency when they have accumulated more (and more diverse) assets and when supportive structural policies are in place.
- Gender-based violence is a core area of focus in analyzing women's economic empowerment, and in urban settings, particularly, where gender norms may be challenged.
- Transformation of gender roles in urban contexts will require wider community involvement and in many contexts collective action to promote group interests and entitlements.
- Full-time employment tends to be very difficult for them, especially if they have young children. Wage employment for a few hours a day would be much easier to manage.
- It would give them some economic independence and bargaining power within the family, and help them to acquire new skills.
- The economic dependence of women on men is one of the prime roots of gender inequality and female oppression in India. Giving priority to women would have two further merits.
- Cities offer several opportunities to mitigate climate change impacts through risk assessments, building codes, land use planning, and nature-based solutions. Rainwater harvesting and management is one way to prevent time poverty for women.
- Thus, to effectively implement climate change policies in urban resilience strategies, policy measures must be inclusive and gender sensitive, with particular attention to the experience of slum residents.
- SHG can become a vehicle of change for the poor and marginalized. SHG rely on the notion of "Self Help" to encourage self-employment and poverty alleviation.
- It looks to build the functional capacity of the poor and the marginalized in the field of employment and income generating activities.

Way forward-

- Women play a crucial role in the production of food and in feeding their families and the world and gender equality are highly connected to food security at a local, national, and global level.
- Thus, women's labour force participation and access to decent work are important and necessary elements of an inclusive and sustainable development process.

- A policy framework encouraging and enabling women's participation should be constructed with an active awareness of the "gender-specific" constraints that face most women.

Conclusion-

The need of the hour is to provide them with opportunities for health, education, work through initiatives like SHGs, NGO programs and Government initiatives like DAY-NULM, PM Awas Yojana, ICDS etc. This would help us in achieving the SDG-5 which empowers all women & achieve gender equality.

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