

3. Key Concepts and Issues since 1991: Humanitarian Issues

Q.1 (A) Choose the correct option.

(1) The Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit (1992) focused on

(a) Environment and development

(b) Nuclear non-proliferation

(c) International trade

(d) Gender issues

(2) Today the Indian approach to gender issues focuses on -

(a) Education

(b) Welfare

(c) Development

(d) Empowerment

(B) State the appropriate concept for the given statement.

(1) Introduction of high yielding variety of seeds and irrigation methods -

Ans. Green Revolution

(2) Think tank of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs -

Ans. NITI Aayog

Q.2 State whether the following statements are true or false with reason.

(1) Planning Commission was created to promote agriculture in India.

Ans. This statement is False.

(i) The Planning Commission was set up in 1950 to formulate a plan for the effective and balanced utilisation of the country's resources.

(ii) Its function was to prepare Five Year Plans to tackle poverty, employment and promote the Welfare State. The Green Revolution was introduced to promote agriculture in India.

(2) National Commission for Women was set up to protect rights for women in India.

Ans. This statement is True.

(i) National Commission for Women was set up to facilitate the redressal of grievances of women.

(ii) It aimed to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women and accelerate their socio-economic development.

Q.3 Explain the correlation between the following.

(1) Women Empowerment and Sustainable Development.

Ans. Empowerment is a process by which any category of oppressed persons gain control over their own lives by developing self esteem and courage to fight against injustice. Sustainable development refers to development using resources in a way that allows for them to renew or to continue to exist for other e.g., recycling materials. This seems almost impossible without gender equality and women's empowerment. Women are empowered when they are able to access



opportunities without restrictions such as in education, career, etc., Women's economic empowerment refers to the ability of women to enjoy their right to control and benefit from resources, income etc as well as the ability to improve their economic status and well-being. Political empowerment includes affirmative action policies to increase participation of women in parliamentary / government positions and policymaking. Thus, women's empowerment is a key factor for sustainable economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability.

(2) Poverty and Development

Ans. Poverty refers to deprivation of the basic necessities such as food, clothing, health services, education, etc., that determine quality of life. In economic terms, it is expressed as the poverty line. Development means some measurable improvement in some particular area. Alleviation or even eradication of poverty is the most important aim of developmental work. Poverty is related to other problems of underdevelopment such as unemployment and inequalities. It hinders economic development as well as leads to issues of health, sanitation and disease, housing, crime, etc.

Poverty alleviation i.e., set of economic and humanitarian measures, such as good governance, economic growth, government support in health education etc., are important for development.

Q.4 Express your opinion.

There is a need to protect the environment.

Ans. I agree with this statement.

The environment refers to all living and non-living things that make up our surroundings. Many environmental problems result due to unplanned management, human activities and technological development that interfere with the environment. Protection of environment refers to conservation and preservation of environment by reducing pollution, soil erosion, global warming, deforestation etc. Main environmental concerns hence are climate change, water scarcity, pollution, loss of biodiversity, etc. Environmental degradation and depletion of resources will result in spread of pests and vector diseases, extinction of species, natural disasters like floods; acid rain, melting of glaciers, etc. Life on this earth cannot exist unless we restore environmental balance.

Q.5 Answer the following.

(1) What is the Green Revolution?

Ans. Green Revolution refers to a large increase in crop production that is achieved by the use of high yielding crop varieties, pesticides, artificial fertilizers, machines and better management of agricultural resources. Norman Borlaug, an agricultural scientist of USA is considered as Father of the Green Revolution for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (1970). In India, M.S. Swaminathan is credited with introducing the Green Revolution in 1965 especially in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. This was necessitated due to famine and acute food shortages due to low productivity in food production. Green Revolution was mainly in wheat, maize and gram production. During its early years, the Green Revolution yielded great economic prosperity leading to significant increases in agricultural output and farmers incomes. However, this did not benefit marginal farmers who could not afford expensive inputs.

(2) What is empowerment? Suggest measures for empowerment of women.

Ans. Empowerment refers to the process by which oppressed or marginalized sections of the



population become stronger, especially in controlling their own life and claiming their own rights. This may happen socially, economically, politically or nationally. The approach to women's issues has progressed from 'welfare' to 'development' to 'empowerment'.

Some of the measures for empowerment of women include -

- (i) Political empowerment - giving women better representation in legislative bodies and in the decision making process.
- (ii) Economic empowerment - such as strengthening women's access to property inheritance and land rights, skill training, work opportunities, micro-credit, increased right to economic resources and power.
- (iii) Social empowerment - through literacy/education, training and raising awareness, freedom from domestic violence, access to information, health services and sanitation.

In India, schemes to empower women include Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana (2015). Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), Mahila Shakti Kendras (2017) etc.

Q.6 Answer the following question in detail with help of given points.

Explain conditions of women in India.

- (a) Economic inequality**
- (b) trafficking and exploration**
- (c) Literacy rate**
- (d) Political representation**

Ans. All over the world, women have to face serious problems such as discrimination and violence, under representation in economic and political decision-making, inequalities in education, health care, landholdings and workplaces and even in human rights.

Some of the important gender issues :

(a) Economic inequality - Participation of women in the labour market is about 28% only. There is also income inequality due to wide gender wage gaps as well as inequality of opportunities to women e.g., unequal access to education and finance. In many countries, women are either not encouraged to work or employed in the informal sector. Women continue to be underrepresented in high-level, highly paid positions and experience gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace. Women experience high levels of poverty, unemployment and other economic hardships.

(b) Trafficking and exploitation - Women are often exploited and denied basic rights. They are trafficked for purpose of sexual and economic exploitation particularly prostitution, sold as brides, subjected to sexual crimes, forced labour, street begging, etc. Trafficking in women means that they are deceived or forced/sold, physically confined, abused with no access to protection or health care.

(c) Literacy rate - low literacy among women is acute in India. As per 2011 census report, female literacy rate is only 65.46% while for males it is 82.14%. The reasons for the low female literacy are -

- (i) traditional patriarchal notions that do not consider female education as economically advantageous
- (ii) Schools in rural areas are not easily accessible and travel may not safe or easy
- (iii) Benefits of schemes like R.T.E have not reached many rural females.
- (iv) Social evils like child marriage, female foeticide, dowry, etc.

(d) Political Representation - Poor political representation of women is a significant gender concern in India. The First Lok Sabha had only 24 women of total 489 members i.e., 5% and the



17th Lok Sabha (2019) has 78 women (14%). This is the highest representation of women in Lok Sabha till date. The Women's Reservation Bill which proposes to reserve 33% of all seats in Lok Sabha and in State Assemblies for women is pending in the Lok Sabha. However, there exists 33% reservation for women in rural and urban local bodies.

