

Women and related issues

Women in gender perspectives:

- There are two aspects i.e. gender and sex.
- Sex is a biological construct and gender is a sociological construct where society sees humans as male and females.
- On the basis of gender, specific personality attributes such as femininity and masculinity are attached.
- Such attribution in turn leads to gender roles which ultimately becomes ground for social inequality.
- **Social inequality** occurs when resources in a given society are distributed unevenly, typically through norms of allocation, that engender specific patterns.. Norms of allocation can also affect the distribution of rights and privileges, social power, access to public goods
- Social inequality is against the idea of meritocracy.
- Gender roles: The World Health Organization (WHO) defines gender roles as "socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.

Implication of social inequality

Economic sphere:-

Velvet ghetto or Pink collarisation of jobs:

- It is a type of job which has been historically meant for women This may include jobs in the beauty industry, air hostess, nursing, teaching, child care, etc.
- As they are female dominated they are paid less as they have less bargaining power

Why it is bad

1. It may lead to less pay
2. *Pink ghetto* leads women into positions that will not lead them to the board room.

- Perpetuates **glass ceiling**- Invisible barrier that prevents from rising beyond a certain level in a hierarchy. At the same time a new phenomena i.e. **Glass escalator phenomena** is also being observed along with the glass ceiling effect.

Glass escalator : When more men join female dominated sectors men are promoted faster than women and given more opportunities

GCI index

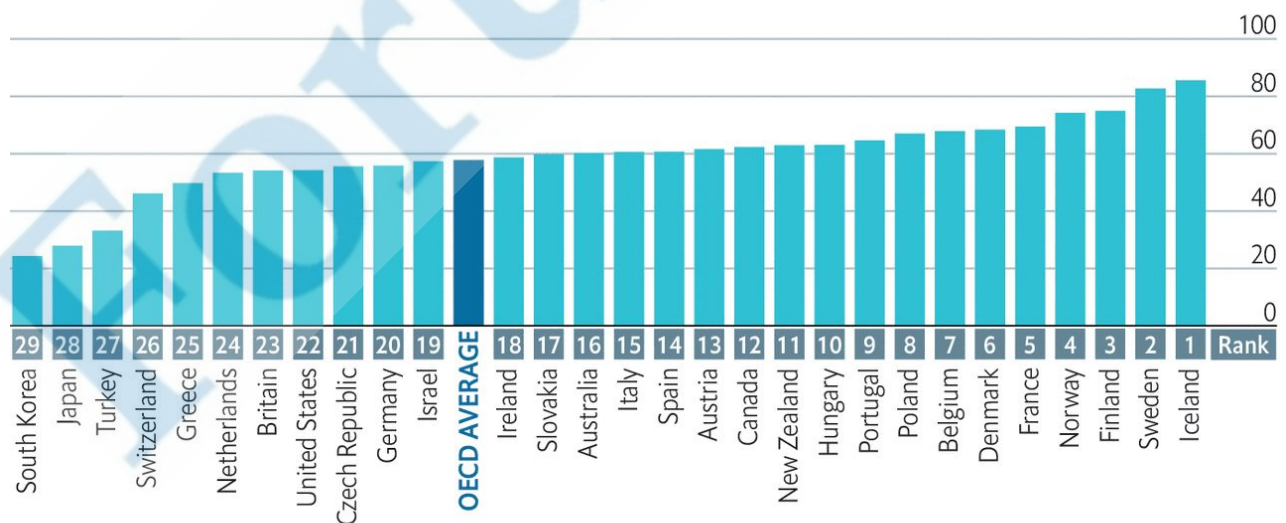
The Economist's 2019 glass-ceiling index (GCI) suggests that progress for women in the workplace has stalled.

The GCI is a yearly assessment of where women have the best and worst chances of equal treatment at work in countries in the OECD countries.

- The index does reflect a few bright spots this year, including women in governmental positions of power. Spain's prime minister appointed the first female-majority cabinet since the country returned to a democracy in 1975.
- More American women than ever were voted into Congress during the 2018 midterm elections.
- Women such as Angela Merkel still hold their respective countries' highest office, which may inspire more women to run for election.

Glass-ceiling index

Environment for working women, 2019 or latest, 100=best



Sources: European Institute for Gender Equality; Eurostat; MSCI ESG Research; GMAC; ILO; Inter-Parliamentary Union; OECD; national sources; *The Economist*

Highlights of this year's index:

- The gender pay gap remains largely unchanged at around 14%
- The share of women in the labour force has crept slightly higher to 64%, but this is still 16 percentage points below the male average
- The share of women in management has flatlined since last year at 32%
- Fewer women took the GMAT business-school entry exams, but this is in line with an overall fall in both men and women taking the test
- The share of women on company boards slightly increased to 23%

Female labour force participation rate:

- The female labour force participation rate indicates what percentage of women within the working age (16-64 years) population that are currently employed, or are seeking employment.
- As the sum of the employed and (searching) unemployed, this indicator signals the relative size of the supply of labor available to engage in the production of goods and services.
- Recently a report of the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy stated that the Female Labour Force Participation had declined considerably due to economic shocks like demonetization, GST and Covid-19 induced lockdown.
- The report stated that the female labour force participation declined from 16.4% in May 2016 to 12.7% in January 2017 which further declined to 9.36% in May 2020. Women suffered 52.4% of the job losses by November 2020 taking a disproportionate hit of the lockdown shock.
- The World Bank estimates that LFPR at 23.4% and the Economic Survey found that LFPR declined by 7.8 percentage points, from 33.1 percent in 2011-12 to 25.3 percent in 2017-18.
- According to the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) India study, Female labour-force participation in India has declined from 34% in 2006 to 24.8% in 2020,

The puzzle behind declining women's participation in labour force

The decline in the labour force participation of women can not be attributed to economic shocks only, various factors led to poor female labour force participation:

- **Household work:** Women in the age group of 24-44 disappear from the labour force as a large proportion of married women go missing, because of the domestic and care responsibilities.
- **Income rise:** This could also be the income effect where women withdraw from work as household income rises or the status effect where women not working contributes to higher status of family.

- **Social stigma against women working outside the house:** especially for those who can afford not to work, continues to influence women's presence in the labor market. A 2016 survey in the Economic and Political Weekly finds that around 40-60 percent of women and men in rural and urban parts of India believe that married women whose husbands earn a good living should not work outside the home.
- **Adverse impact of government policies:** Indian women also struggle with discriminatory government policies like the amended India's Maternity Benefit Act 2017, which increased women's paid maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks. This act reinforces women's role as primary caregivers and increases employer bias,
- **Violence against women in public places:** Recent studies have shown that violence against women in public places, particularly the risk of sexual assault and unsafe work environment, discourages Indian women from entering the labor market.
- **Gender wage gap:** Another big impediment to women's labor force participation is the gender wage gap. Women earn less wages in comparison to their male counterparts, despite India's Equal Remuneration Act of 1976.

U Shaped Hypothesis

Women's participation in the labor market varies greatly across countries, reflecting differences in economic development, social norms, education levels, fertility rates, and access to childcare and other supportive services.

- The relationship between female labor force participation and these factors is complex. One dimension that has been widely examined is the **U-shaped relationship** between economic development and women's labor force participation.

What is the U-shaped hypothesis?

- The U-shaped hypothesis describes the correlation of the female labor force participation rate with economic development
- The hypothesis posits that female participation rates are highest in poor countries, where women are engaged in subsistence activities, and fall in middle-income countries because of the transition of mainly men to industrial jobs.

How Covid-19 induced lockdown impacted women?

- With reverse migration, and loss of jobs for men the rural jobs shifted from women to men as men are given higher priority for work in our society..

- Women faced increased physical, mental and verbal violence during the lockdown. This is because women are in constant proximity to their abusers and they couldn't go out and complain to the police either due to lockdown or due to societal pressures.
 - The National Commission for Women (NCW) received more than 1,000 domestic violence complaints in March –April 2020 and registered an increase of at least 2.5 times in domestic violence complaints since the nationwide lockdown and according to the government legal assistance to women was provided in a total of 2,878 cases of domestic violence in the lockdown period of April to June.
- Constant fear and isolation has caused stress to pregnant women which will affect the next generation too.
- Due to overwhelmed ASHA workers in rural areas women have little access to family planning services, and other healthcare needs like institutional deliveries, neo-natal care, etc
- Increase in unwanted pregnancies, maternal mortality and neonatal mortality are expected to emerge as major concern areas.

Gender wage pay gap issues

- It is the average difference between the remuneration for men and women who are working. It has two aspects- non-adjusted versus *adjusted* pay gap. The latter typically takes into account differences in hours worked, occupations chosen, education and job experience.

Data wrt gender pay gap :

1. **World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2019-2020** measures the extent of gender-based gaps in economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.

India dropped four places, from 2018, to take the 112th rank in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2019-2020.

2. Women and lower-paid workers have disproportionately borne the brunt of the decrease in wages due to the COVID-19 crisis as their working hours were reduced, according to **the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Global Wage Report 2020-2021**.

According to the **Global Wage Report 2018/19**, India recorded the highest gender wage gap at 34 percent.

In India, when it comes to hourly wages, women are paid the most unequally. On average, women are paid 34 per cent less than men in the country.

Why is it bad

1. It violates the fundamental Rights under article 14,15,16 and is against article 39(d) which states equal pay for work.
2. It reduces economic output as half of the population is almost unemployed or employed in low paying jobs.
3. As per the European Commission as women have 17.5% less pay than men they would have lesser pensions after retirement

Feminisation of poverty

- UNDP says that “The feminization of poverty is the term given to the phenomenon in which women experience poverty at far higher rates than men.”
- A 1992 UN report found that “the number of rural women living in poverty in the developing countries has increased by almost 50% over the past 20 years
- According to the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995, “More than one billion people in the world today, the great majority of whom are women, live in unacceptable conditions of poverty, mostly in the developing countries (UNDP).
- Inequality has ‘female face’ in India, women’s unpaid work worth 3.1% of GDP.
- Women do three times as much unpaid care work at home compared to men, and make up 70% of workers in the health and social care sectors

Reasons for feminisation of poverty:

1. Labour of women is often primarily in terms of family care and household duties—works for which they receive no wages. Women living in developing nations may also be relied upon to participate in agricultural labour on the household land to help support the livelihoods of their families and villages. With such responsibilities, women have less time to devote to paid employment as compared to men, and thus earn a smaller income, even though they may actually be doing more work than their male counterparts. The nature of the work they do in households is also different

2. When employment opportunities are limited, women may have to migrate to other areas to find work. If a woman has children, however, she may be unable to pursue a job which is far from her residence. Thus she faces a reduced accessibility to opportunities and this in turn leads to less education for her children and deprivation of adequate nourishment and health care and further diminished opportunities for her children. Usually a cycle of poverty is thus perpetuated.

3. Women's jobs are more likely than men's to be forms of informal employment, which takes place in small, unregistered enterprises and are not protected by government regulation. Women have often been associated with specific kinds of work, such as teaching, caring for children and the elderly, domestic service, etc. These kinds of jobs lack stability and security and the possibility of working at higher salaries. They are open to exploitation and the women, due to fear of losing the job, even if it is exploitative and with poor pay, remain silent and continue to work in these conditions.

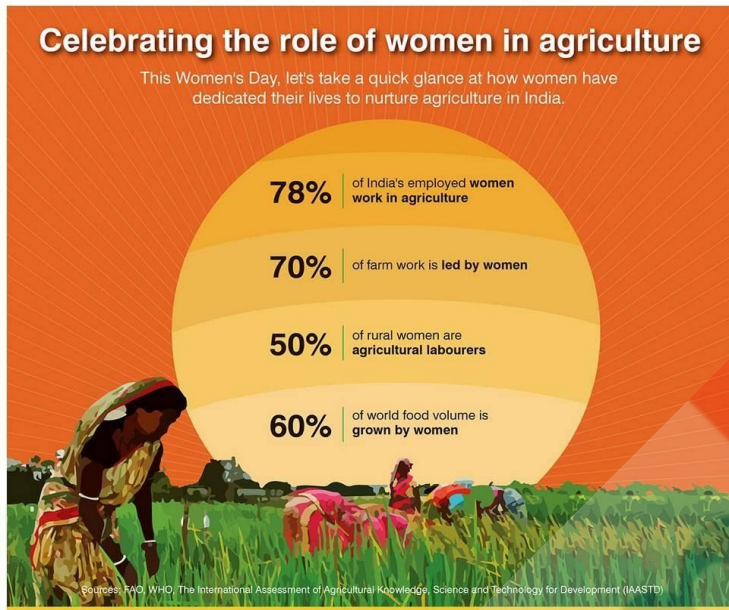
4. In the same vein, the unpaid labour that women perform in taking care of family members and other household chores is considered of far less worth (at least economically) than positions that require formal education or training. If the women do take up jobs outside the homes, there is usually no family support

5. One of the long-time causes for increased numbers of single-mother families was a higher rate of male mortality after wars and periods of conflict. In Western countries today, with divorce common and/or women choosing not to marry, many women are single mothers who must support a household on only their income.

Feminisation of Agri:

- The Agriculture Census (2010-11) shows that out of an estimated 118.7 million cultivators, 30.3% were females. Similarly, out of an estimated 144.3 million agricultural labourers, 42.6% were females.
- According to Census 2011, there has been a 24% increase in the number of female agricultural labourers between 2001 and 2011.

- As per Census 2011, out of total female main workers, 55% were agricultural labourers and 24% cultivators.



Reasons for feminisation of agriculture:

1. Migration of males towards cities.
2. Agriculture distress.
3. Absence of other economic opportunities for women.

Concerns:

1. Agriculture is a low paying avenue.
2. Even though feminisation of agri. occurred but women did not get autonomy over the household economy.
3. No access to land resources.
4. No access to institutional credit
5. No access to tech inputs on the farm.

Social Implications:

Patriarchy:

- In the early Vedic period the status of men and women was same
- In the later Vedic period the status of women started to decline due to emergence of new socio-cultural systems.
- Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. Some patriarchal societies are also patrilineal, meaning that property and title are inherited by the male lineage.

According to Sylvia Walby there are six patriarchal structures that helped men maintain dominance over women:

- Male dominated unions in the workplace. (Paid work)
- Attaching beauty with females
- Labeling sexuality (Sexually active women were seen as negative).
- Violence against women (Physical and Mental)
- Lack of Government efforts towards women in the past.
- Relationship of women in her household i.e., patriarchal society

- As they are restricted to households they are emotionally weak.
- Further, women's mobility is restricted due to the assumption of pristine femininity. Thus, they are not allowed to go for higher education or to avail economic opportunities.
- Women's physical weakness leads to subjugation of women via physical violence.
- Crimes against women increased 7.3 per cent from 2018 to 2019, and according to NCRB data released in 2020
- Majority of cases under crime against women under IPC were registered under 'cruelty by husband or his relatives' (30.9%), followed by 'assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty' (21.8%)
- Women's miserly, even increased during COVID-19 which emerged to be a shadow pandemic.

Shadow pandemic:

- Following the Canterbury earthquake in New Zealand, there was a 53% rise in domestic violence.

Reason for shadow pandemic

The Shadow Pandemic: Violence Against Women and Girls and COVID-19

Globally,

243 million



women and girls aged 15-49 have been subjected to sexual and/or physical violence perpetrated by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months.

The number is likely to **INCREASE** as security, health, and money worries heighten tensions and strains are accentuated by cramped and confined living conditions.

Emerging data shows that since the outbreak of COVID-19, violence against women and girls (VAWG), and particularly domestic violence, has **INTENSIFIED**.

In **France**, reports of domestic violence have increased by **30%** since the lockdown on March 17.

In **Cyprus** and **Singapore** helplines have registered an increase in calls of **30%** and **33%**, respectively.

In **Argentina** emergency calls for domestic violence cases have increased by **25%** since the lockdown on March 20.

Increased cases of domestic violence and demand for emergency shelter have also been reported in **Canada, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom** and **the United States**.



As stay-at-home orders expand to contain the spread of the virus, women with violent partners increasingly find themselves isolated from the people and resources that can help them.

87,000 women

were intentionally killed in 2017. The majority of these killings were committed by an intimate partner or family member of the victim.

Violence against women and girls is pervasive but at the same time widely under-reported. Less

than **40%** of women who experience violence report these crimes or seek help of any sort.

The global cost of violence against women had previously been estimated at approximately.

US\$1.5 trillion

That figure can only be rising as violence increases now, and continues in the aftermath of the pandemic.

The surge in COVID-19 cases is straining even the most advanced and best-resourced health systems to the breaking point, including those at the front line in violence response.



Domestic violence shelters are reaching capacity, or unable to take new victims due to lockdown and social distancing measures. In other cases, they are being re-purposed to serve as health centers.

National responses to COVID-19 must include:



Services to address violence against women and girls, including increased resources to support shelters, hotlines and online counselling. These essential services should be expanded and adapted to the crisis context to ensure survivors' access to support.



A strong message from law enforcement that **impunity will not be tolerated**. Police and Justice actors must ensure that incidents of VAWG are given high priority and care must be taken to address the manifestations of violence emerging in the context of COVID 19.



Psychosocial support for women and girls affected by the outbreak, gender-based violence survivors, frontline health workers and other frontline social support staff must be prioritized.



- According to the UN Women, the “shadow pandemic” is due to economic, health and security strains brought on or worsened by movement restrictions, crowded homes and reduced access to peer groups and social networks.
- Some of the reasons behind physical and verbal abuse reported are the inability to efficiently manage resources, not serving food on time and the inability to procure ration/relief material and this violence was mostly inflicted by male members of the family.
- According to the NFHS-4 data, 71% of women whose husbands got drunken often encountered spousal violence – either physical or sexual. This situation has been worsened during the COVID-19 lockdown period.
- Other reasons include limited education, mobility, access to work opportunity, ownership and negligible control over resources like land and finance.

Second shift

- As women have double burden of work at home and office, they are said to be doing a second shift in work at household, This has led to higher burden and affects their mental and physical health leading to lower well being

Mommy Track

Mommy Track refers to women who disregard their careers and professional duties in order to satisfy the needs of their families. Research also suggests flexible work arrangements allow for the achievement of a healthy work and family balance.

Objectification of women: can be roughly defined as the seeing and/or treating a person, usually a woman, as *an object*. In this entry, the focus is primarily on sexual objectification.

Martha Nussbaum has identified seven features that are involved in the idea of treating a person as an object:

1. *instrumentality*: the treatment of a person as a tool for the objectifier's purposes;
2. *denial of autonomy*: the treatment of a person as lacking in autonomy and self-determination;
3. *inertness*: the treatment of a person as lacking in agency, and perhaps also in activity;
4. *fungibility*: the treatment of a person as interchangeable with other objects;
5. *violability*: the treatment of a person as lacking in boundary-integrity;
6. *ownership*: the treatment of a person as something that is owned by another (can be bought or sold);
7. *denial of subjectivity*: the treatment of a person as something whose experiences and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account.

Burden of symbolism: Women in India are either viewed as objects or as goddess. Both create problems of its own.

As a part of symbolism women are always expected to be forgiving, self-sacrificing and altruistic entities. It does not take into account women's individualism.

Women and related issues

(Womanhood brings challenges and negative implications on various fronts. In earlier class and handout, implications on economic and social front were taken up)

Continued:

Political implications:

- Gender roles dictate a position of submission to women. Hence, “Power gaps” still exist between men and women in our economies, our political systems, and our corporations.
- For example, only 24 percent of parliamentary seats worldwide are held by women and there are only 10 female heads of government out of a possible 193 countries and fewer women have portfolios in transport, economics or finance.
- Women in the labour market are also paid less than men and are much less likely to be in senior positions: less than 6 percent of CEOs in S&P 500 companies are women. And while women work more hours than men, this work is more likely to be unpaid care work.
- In last two years elections in UK, Bolivia, Mexico, Brazil, etc have witnessed substantially higher number of women in comparison to the past
- The SDG gender index says that despite higher number of women in parliaments their influence is limited

The Brighter picture

- Rwanda has a gender-balanced Cabinet with 52 per cent of its member’s women and 61% of parliament members are women.
- In India the composition of women coming from lower strata has increased considerably and political parties like BJD of Odisha has reserved 33% of its seats for women candidates.
- In India, with every election, more women MPs are occupying the center stage, i.e. 78 women MPs are elected to the parliament in 2019.
- The economic survey for 2017-18 states that there are 13.72 lakh elected women representatives in Panchayati Raj institutions. This constitutes about 44.2 per cent of the total number of elected representatives.

A different story

Paris fined for appointing too many women

- Paris city authorities have been slapped with a €90,000 (over Rs 80 lakh) fine for appointing too many women to top-level positions in 2018 and violating a national rule designed to ensure gender parity in employment.

- In 2018, 11 women and five men were appointed to leadership positions in Paris' city hall.
- The rule lays down that one sex should not account for over 60 per cent of nominations to management positions.

The impact of quotas

- Argentina adopted the world's first gender quota law in 1991, mandating that political parties nominate women for 30 percent of the electable positions on their candidate lists.
- More than 100 countries have implemented some form of gender quotas in an effort to improve women's representation in leadership positions..
- A survey stated that women presence in UP villages did not impact any decision making at the ground level
- In a non-political context, seven years after Norway implemented a 40% gender quota for corporate board members, there was no change in female enrolment in business education programmes
- Perhaps quotas need a longer time to work data from India's West Bengal state show that women's political candidacy increases, and young girls are more likely to view themselves in leadership roles, only after a village council has been headed by a woman for two consecutive terms

Road to gender equality

- The world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. The Human Development Report's Gender Inequality Index (GII) shows that overall progress in gender inequality has been slowing in recent years. For instance, based on current trends, it would take 257 years to close the gender gap in economic opportunity.
- UNDP is encouraging national governments to incentivise women via taxes and education to enter into rationally male dominated areas like armed forces and IT
- "#MeToo, #NiUnaMenos, #TimesUp. #UnVioladorEnTuCamino. The women's rights demonstrations we're seeing across the world today, energized by young feminists, are signaling that new alternatives for a different world are needed

Pink as a symbol of political colour for women

- Since the 1990s, feminist and queer movements have reinvented the gendered colour into a political choice.
- Earlier seen as "girly" (meaning, feminine and weak), pink was subverted as a statement of strength and as one of the best ways to push against gender stereotyping. The use of pink ribbons for breast cancer awareness in 1992 is one of the earliest such examples.
- In 2020, USA saw a powerful women's political campaign i.e.- Pink pantsuit campaign whose aim was to sensitize women towards their voting rights as well as to support more women candidates.

- In India, too, pink is strongly associated with women's movements. The Gulabi Gang from Uttar Pradesh, which works to end violence against women, is instantly recognisable by the pop pink saris its members wear.

Initiatives undertaken for women empowerment.

Global initiatives for Women empowerment

- Beijing action plan : The year 2020 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) (Beijing + 25).

About Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)

- BPfA was adopted in Fourth World Conference on Women (1995). It sets strategic objectives and actions for advancement of women and achievement of gender equality in 12 critical areas of concern. They are
 1. Women and poverty
 2. Education and training of women
 3. Women and health
 4. Violence against women
 5. Women and armed conflict
 6. Women and economy
 7. Women in power and decision making
 8. Institutional mechanism
 9. Human rights of women
 10. Women and media
 11. Women and environment
 12. The girl child
- United Nations has organized four world conferences (WC) on women. Three others are First WC in Mexico City (1975), Second WC in Copenhagen (1980) and Third WC in Nairobi (1985).
- Worldwide progress in implementation of BPfA is reviewed every five years by Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).
- CSW is a functional commission of UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to promotion of gender equality and women empowerment.
- The platform is not a legally binding document, but rather a guide for the U.N. governments and non-governmental organizations.

Legislation related to women in India

Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961:

- It is criminal law, under which the givers and receivers of dowry may be prosecuted.

- Dowry demands constitute a reason for domestic violence in many households in India.
- This is the main reason for the existence of this law.
- Under this law, if an individual takes, gives or even demands dowry, they can be punished with imprisoned for 6 months or a fine of Rs.5,000 may be levied on the offender.
- Several states like Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh etc. have amended this Act to give it more teeth.
- Dowry under this Act includes property, goods or money given by either party to the marriage, by the parents of either party or by anyone else in connection with the marriage.
- The Act applies to persons of all religions in India.

Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at workplace Act 2013

- The Act defines sexual harassment at the workplace and creates a mechanism for redressal of complaints. It also provides safeguards against false or malicious charges.
- Every employer is required to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee at each office or branch with 10 or more employees.
- The Complaints Committees have the powers of civil courts for gathering evidence.
- The Complaints Committees are required to provide for conciliation before initiating an inquiry if requested by the complainant.
- Penalties have been prescribed for employers. Non-compliance with the provisions of the Act shall be punishable with a fine.
- Repeated violations may lead to higher penalties and cancellation of license or registration to conduct business.

JS Verma Committee recommendations on Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Act

- Justice J.S. Verma Committee had recommended setting up of an employment tribunal instead of an internal complaints committee (ICC) in the Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Act.
- To ensure speedy disposal of complaints, the committee proposed that the tribunal should not function as a civil court but may choose its own procedure to deal with each complaint.
- An internal complaints committee as laid down under the act could be counterproductive as dealing with such complaints in-house could discourage women from filing complaints.
- Domestic workers should be included within the purview of the Act.
- The Committee has termed the Sexual Harassment Act “unsatisfactory” and said it did not reflect the spirit of the Vishakha guidelines — framed by the Supreme Court in 1997 to curb sexual harassment at the workplace.
- The Committee said any “unwelcome behavior” should be seen from the subjective perception of the complainant, thus broadening the scope of the definition of sexual harassment.

Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code:

- It is a criminal law that keeps check of domestic violence.
- Section 498A of the IPC states that if a husband or relative of the husband subjects wife to cruelty, he/she shall be punished with imprisonment for up to 3 years and shall be liable to fine.
- Cruelty under this law has been given broad scope. It may refer to any conduct that may lead to a woman committing suicide or which causes grave injury to her life or health, including mental health.
- It also includes harassment in the name of dowry.

Maternity benefit act :

- The Act extends women's paid maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks.
- Of these, up to eight weeks can be taken pre-delivery.
- Enterprises with 50 or more employees must also provide crèches.
- They should allow the mother four crèche visits, daily.
- Women with two or more children get reduced entitlements.
- The costs of these benefits are to be borne solely by employers.

Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020

- The Bill proposes the requirement of the opinion of one registered medical practitioner (instead of two or more) for termination of pregnancy up to 20 weeks of gestation (foetal development period from the time of conception until birth).
- It introduces the requirement of the opinion of two registered medical practitioners for termination of pregnancy of 20-24 weeks of gestation.
- It has also enhanced the gestation limit for 'special categories' of women which includes survivors of rape, victims of incest and other vulnerable women like differently-abled women and minors.

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA):

- It is a civil law that ensures:
 1. Protection of married women against men
 2. Protection of unmarried women who are in live-in relationships.
 3. Protection of women from family members, including mothers, grandmothers etc.
- Under this law, women can pursue security against domestic violence, abuse and battery.
- The law expands the definition of domestic violence to include any act (omission or commission) which harms, injures or endangers the physical or mental well-being of a woman.
- This includes physical, verbal, emotional (including not having a child or a male child, marrying without consent), economic abuse (including violence related to stridhan, dowry and property) and sexual abuse.
- They can also claim financial compensation and the right to live in their shared household.
- Furthermore, the victim can even ask for maintenance from the abuser in case they are living apart.
- Under this law, a Magistrate can pass a protection order to ensure that the abuser does not contact or is in close proximity to the survivor.

Abetment of Suicide:

- If any individual commits suicide, whoever abets the commission of such suicide shall be punished under IPC 306 with imprisonment of up to 10 years and shall be liable to fine.
- Section 113A of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 relates to the presumption as to the abetment of suicide.
- Offences related to dowry and abetment of suicide are cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable.

Other laws to address rape cases:

- Rape of women and minor children is an offence under the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 amended these two laws along with the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.
- The Act provides for more stringent punishment for perpetrators of rape, especially of girls below 16 and 12.
- Punishment for the rape of a girl less than 12 years has been provided with the minimum jail term of 20 years, which may go up to life in prison or death sentence.
- The punishment for gang rape of a girl below 16 years will invariably be life imprisonment.
- The minimum punishment in case of rape of woman has been increased from imprisonment up to 7 years to 10 years, which is extendable to life imprisonment.
- The prescribed time limit for the completion of the investigation of all cases of rape is 2 months.
- The deadline for the completion of trial in all rape cases will be two months.
- The time limit for disposal of appeals in rape cases is prescribed to be within 6 months.

Government Measures to tackle domestic violence**Helplines:**

- Several government agencies like the National Commission for Women have launched helplines for domestic violence victims.
- Non-Governmental Organisations are also operating 24 hours helplines to help victims of domestic violence by transferring them into a secure place and providing them with counselling.
- The Health Ministry has collaborated with the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences to provide psychological support for women facing domestic violence through a helpline.

Other measures:

- The Delhi High Court has directed the concerned authorities to consider appointing temporary protection officers until regular appointments are made to address the shadow pandemic.
- States like Odisha and Tamil Nadu have started a “phone-up programme” and directed the concerned departments and social welfare workers to check up on or contact women

who had earlier complained about domestic violence.

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has conducted a special sensitisation webinar for helpline personnel on how to provide psychological and legal counselling. It has directed district collectors/district magistrates to provide logistical support for helpline personnel and to make duty rosters for concerned officers to enable them to help the victims.
- The Jammu and Kashmir High Court has directed all courts in Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir to treat domestic violence cases as 'urgent' and has called on the government to designate certain pharmacies or grocery stores as safe places for women, increase the availability of tele/online legal and counselling services and conduct awareness campaigns on domestic violence.

What are the challenges?

Challenges caused by COVID-19

- The stay-at-home orders have increased risks of some gender-based violence survivors in their own homes as they are confined with their abusers.
- Restriction on movement adds further strains to households by exacerbating gender-based violence. This is because such measures hinder complaints due to the fear of repercussions and the lack of traditional sources of help.
- Groups that were marginalised before the outbreak like refugees, sex workers etc., are further stigmatised as they are blamed for spreading the coronavirus. This further increases the vulnerability to gender-based violence in these groups.
- Interventions to counter gender-based violence during the pandemic have been more focused on addressing intimate partner violence.
- Lesser focus is given to other gender-based violence issues like child marriage, survival sex and sexual exploitation.
- Additionally, there had been an increase in home drinking or forced abstinence from alcohol due to the closure of local wine shops. This has aggravated the complicated relationship between alcohol and domestic violence.

More focus on reactionary measures:

- The reaction in the form of increased stringency of punishment for such crimes is largely an expression of helplessness and frustration.
- Measures related to prevention and rehabilitation have largely failed.
- Addressing the deep-rooted social problems in India's patriarchal society is a need of the hour as laws alone are insufficient.

Issues with reporting:

- Women often do not report crimes in fear of social stigma and lack of witness protection by criminal justice system
- More often the police officials do not report crimes and is true especially for women from lower strata
- During Covid-19 lockdown the situation worsened as the women could not travel to counseling centres and this gave the oppressor more opportunity to harass women.

Inaccessibly to information:

- Many remote solutions to gender-based violence depend on technology.
- However, girls and women do not always have the same access to and control of technology as that of men.
- A recent report indicates that only 38% of women in India own a mobile phone.

Issues with capital punishment:

- There is no evidence supporting capital punishment for rapists being more effective than life imprisonment.
- In fact, it may become counterproductive, as it would push the rapists to kill the victims to avoid exposure and capital punishment.

Lack of specialised training:

- Government officials and social workers require specialised training for delivering services in an emergency setting.
- There is a need for training for using international best practices and survivor-centred approaches, which addresses the increased cases of violence against women and girls amid the pandemic-led crisis.

What can be the way forward?**Womenomics of Abe :**

- Abe's campaign promise, before his party's stunning victory in December 2012, was to bring Japan out of its deflationary funk, into strong and sustainable economic growth. His three arrows consisted of expansionary monetary and fiscal policies (the first two arrows), and structural and economic reforms (the third). This third arrow consisted of deregulation, trade liberalization, tax reform and industrial restructuring.
- An important component of the third arrow was "womenomics", getting more women into the workforce and in positions of leadership.
- Female participation is crucial for Japan, since its population is declining and also ageing rapidly. The elderly will make up 40% of the total population by 2060, and the ratio of working to retired persons will be 1:1 by 2050.
- Abe wants businesses to double their childcare leave to three years. Only 3.1% of the board seats are held by women in Japan, as against 19.2% in the US and 20.8% in Canada. The "womenomics" plan also contains reforms like removing the tax penalty for working mothers, and introducing new training subsidies to help them return to the workplace.

Need of Intersectional feminism in India:

- Kimberlé Crenshaw, in 1989 explained Intersectional feminism as, "a prism for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other," in a recent interview with Time.

- “All inequality is not created equal,” she says. An intersectional approach shows the way that people’s social identities can overlap, creating compounding experiences of discrimination.
- Intersectional feminism centres the voices of those experiencing overlapping, concurrent forms of oppression in order to understand the depths of the inequalities and the relationships among them in any given context.
- A Dalit woman being the victim here adds an important layer of intersectionality, which cannot be ignored. Marginalised women are given the least power, thus they are the most vulnerable and become easy victims of hate crimes. According to a National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report, there has been a 25% increase in crimes against Dalits over the past decade.
- It is also insensitive for the media to casually talk about the gory details of the crime; for a Dalit woman to hear the details repeated to her constantly, leaves her in constant fear
- India has a history of ignoring intersectionality when it comes to crimes against Dalit women. The oppression faced by upper-caste and upper/middle-class women cannot be compared to the multifaceted oppression faced by Dalit women. Not only do they have to face the brunt of casteism from upper-caste men and women, but also patriarchy from both upper-caste and Dalit men, also called triple alienation. Due to this, there was a split in the feminist movement in India where Dalit women felt unrepresented, and thus came the concept of Dalit feminism.
- The #MeToo movement led by celebrities and upper-class women, although much needed, again, failed to talk about the struggles faced specifically by marginalised women. While the media also publicised the #MeToo movement, it is a shame that it did not give the same amount of publicity to Dalit women.
- Just like the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States brought up conversations on intersectional feminism, the same topic needs to be discussed in India too. It is important for us to check our biases and unlearn stereotypes. There are many instances of casteism and classism that we have normalised in our day-to-day life; such as not letting the house helpers eat or drink in the same utensils that we use, telling them to sit on the floors, etc

Inclusive support:

- Crimes related to violence against women and girls must be given higher priority by the government, with the strengthening of technology-based solutions like helplines, online counselling etc.
- Those victims with no access to phones and internet must be provided with expanded social support and proactive police and justice services.
- Women police officers must be authorised to take measures to address the complaints related to gender-based violence. This ensures a gender-sensitive approach to these social problems.

Making gender-based violence a mainstream issue:

- This can be done through sensitisation campaigns and platforms that help women share, exchange and collaborate with each other to deal with various issues related to gender-based violence both at home and at work.

- Awareness campaigns on how to recognise and address gender-based violence must be provided at the grass-root levels.
- This is vital as many women and girls in India accept gender-based violence as a part and parcel of their lives due to the patriarchal setup of society.
- It should be noted that these awareness campaigns must be carefully designed in such a way that they avoid inadvertently creating additional harm, ensuring respect and support for the survivors.

Role of ASHA workers:

- They are the first to contact the victims of domestic violence while accessing health services.
- ASHA workers can be sensitised to play a role in helping the victims by responding quickly.
- They can help women to come forward to report violence and reduce the stigmatisation of such victims.

Empowering civil societies:

- Governments should increase funding for civil society organisations, which play a critical role in educating masses about essential services, legal safeguards and social welfare measures that are currently available.
- They play an important role in regularly checking suspicious houses and providing in-person assistance and shelters for the victims.

Laws for rehabilitation

- New legislation must be enacted for granting “Interim Relief” (a large sum of money paid by the perpetrator) to the victim of severe sexual assault.
- This money must be utilised for the rehabilitation of the victim.
- The state government should take full responsibility for the rehabilitation of the victim.

Addressing systemic gender discrimination:

- Women workforce often comes second to that of men.
- For instance, women account for 70% of the global health workforce and are like to be frontline health workers with caretaking responsibilities during the COVID-19.
- Yet, their health and safety are given lesser priority when compared to their male counterparts as seen in the distribution of PPE that is more fitting for men.

Women Reservation Bill

- The Women's Reservation Bill was initially introduced in the parliament on September 12, 1996.
- As per the bill, the seats will be reserved on a rotational basis. The seats would be determined by a draw of lots in such a way that a seat would only be reserved once in every three consecutive general elections. But this bill is still not passed in the Parliament. This should be given priority in passage

Other measures:

- Gender-sensitive criminal justice system, laws, government schemes etc must be ensured.
- Government schemes must be gender-sensitive so that women are given equal importance during social and economic assistance by the government.
- The education system must incorporate the norms of equality of all regardless of their sex, race and other differences.
- Measures must be taken to infuse good moral and religious values in children.
- Informal complaint centres in medical stores, grocery shops etc., can be initiated to receive complaints from even those victims who do not have access to technology.

Children and related issues

Different definitions:

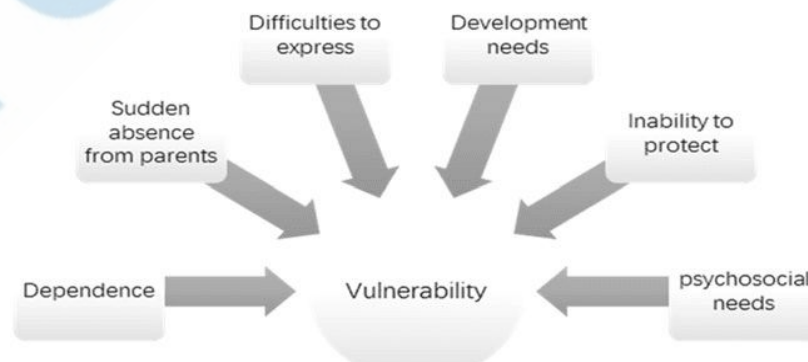
- As per the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 – a child is defined as a person who has not completed 14 years of age. (14-18 are adolescent).
- The Plantation Labour Act 1951 has separate definitions for child, adolescent and adult. According to it 'child' means a person who has not completed his fourteenth year. 'Adolescent' means a person who has completed his fourteenth year but has not completed his eighteenth year whereas 'adult' means a person who has completed his eighteenth year.
- Matrimonial laws such as Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 states that a male cannot attain majority until he is 21 years of age and the corresponding age for a female is 18.
- Juvenile justice act, 2015 In case of a heinous offence alleged to have been committed by a child, who has completed or is above the age of sixteen years.

(The juvenile is a child who is alleged to have committed /violated some law which declares the act or omission on the part of the child as an offence.)

- The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as an individual who has not attained the age of 18 years. In India, different laws define the words 'child' and 'minor' differently.

Why are children vulnerable?

Child are most vulnerable due to:



Thus to protect children, rights are given:

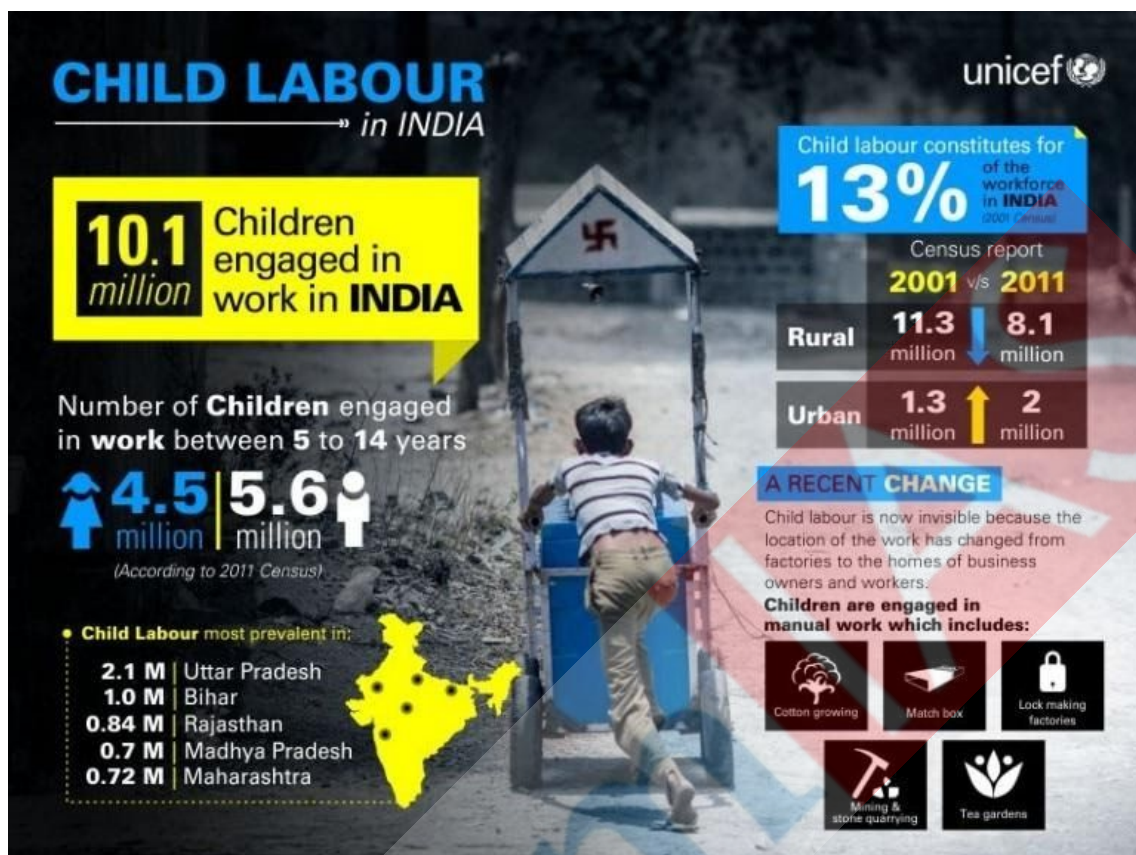
According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children – that India ratified in 1992 – all children are born with fundamental rights.

- Right to Survival – to life, health, nutrition, name, nationality
- Right to Development – to education, care, leisure, recreation, cultural activities
- Right to Protection – from exploitation, abuse, neglect
- Right to Participation – to expression, information, thought, religion.

2019 marks the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) by the UN General Assembly.

Major child issues:**Child labour**

- Data: As per Census 2011, the total child population in India in the age group (5-14) years is 259.6 million. Of these, 10.1 million (3.9% of total child population) are working, either as 'main workers' or as 'marginal workers'. In addition, more than 42.7 million children in India are out of school.
- Every 11th child is working in India (5-18 years).
- UNICEF estimates that India, has the highest number of labourers in the world under 14 years of age, while sub-Saharan African countries have the highest percentage of children who are deployed as child labourers. (THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN report)
- More than half of working children in India are concentrated in five states namely Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. These states account for more than 55 lakh child workers.



Definition of child labour :

- ILO: is best defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. 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.
- India's Census 2001 office, defines: child labour as participation of a child less than 17 years of age in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit. Such participation could be physical or mental or both.

Dimensions of Child labour:

1. Economic dimension:

Demand side:

- Nature of labour : plantation works, carpet industry.
- Cost effective nature.
- Big informal economy.

Supply side : poverty, lack of schools, ignorance.

2. **Socio-cultural dimension:** will make a person responsible, continuity of heritage, values etc. Child labour must be seen as less a phenomena of poverty and more of social attitudes and sensibilities. Only when society as a whole internalises this sentiment will there be enough conviction to make a positive impact on the eradication of child labour.
3. **Functionalism: Vocation vs education debate.**
Ref: Gandhi ji supported vocation in Wardha scheme 1937
4. **Gendered Dimension of Child Labour:** one universalist perspective: Parents believe that girls need to be socialised into their adult roles as children and that formal education has no meaning for them, thus they are engage in domestic child labour.
5. **Intersectional dimension of child labour: (case study of bihar):** The 2011 Census points out that a staggering 51% of SCs and 56% of STs live below the poverty line in the state. The ingrained notions of impurity and untouchability in the state further add to their problems.

A majority of Dalit and Adivasi children in the state do not attend schools due to the extreme discrimination they face from teachers and fellow students. The National Family Health Survey-4 reveals that as many as 55.7% of child labourers in the state stay away from education (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2017).

Legal provisions against child labour:

Constitutional Provisions

1. Article 23 prohibits the trafficking in human beings and forced labour.
2. Article 24 prohibits the employment of children below the age of fourteen years in factories.
3. Article 39(e) makes it a duty of the State to prevent the children from entering into jobs, unsuited to their age.
4. Article 45 promise to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6 and 14.

Statutory Provisions:

1. **Factories Act, 1948:** The Act prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years in any factory. The law also placed rules on who, when and how long can pre-adults aged 15–18 years be employed in any factory.
2. **Mines Act, 1952:** The Act prohibits the employment of children below 18 years of age in a mine.

3. **Ghurupadswamy committee 1978**, recommended a comprehensive law on child labour which lead to creation of :
Child labour (Prohibition and & Regulation) Act in 1986.
 - a. The act prohibited children from being employed in specified hazardous occupations and at the same time regulated their working condition in other non-hazardous occupations and processes.
 - b. It was amended in 2016 with the enactment of the Child labour (Prohibition and Prevention) Amendment Act, 2016 in August 2016.
 - c. It provides for a complete prohibition on the employment of children below 14 years in all occupations and processes and prohibits the employment of adolescents (14-18 years) in hazardous occupations and processes.
4. **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009**
 - a. The law mandates free and compulsory education to all children aged 6 to 14 years. This legislation also mandated that 25 per cent of seats in every private school must be allocated for children from economically disadvantaged groups (implementation gaps remain).
5. **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of Children Act, 2015**
 - a. This law made it a crime, punishable with a prison term, for anyone to keep a child in bondage for the purpose of employment.
6. **India ratified International Labour Organizations Convention (ILO) no 138** (minimum age for employment) and convention no 182 (worst forms of child labour) last year, to symbolise its commitment and initiatives for the eradication of child labour and attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 related with curbing of child labour.

(Convention No. 182- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999, of the International Labour Organization (ILO), has become the first international labour standard ever to achieve universal ratification (i.e. all 187 member countries of ILO have now ratified it).

Flaws of Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016

- One, it has slashed the list of hazardous occupations for children from 83 to include just mining, explosives, and occupations mentioned in the Factory Act. This means that work in chemical mixing units, cotton farms, battery recycling units, and brick kilns, among others, have been dropped.
 - Further, even the ones listed as hazardous can be removed, according to Section 4 not by Parliament but by government authorities at their own discretion.
- Two, section 3 in Clause 5 allows child labour in “family or family enterprises” or allows the child to be “an artist in an audio-visual entertainment industry”. The clause is also

dangerous as it does not define the hours of work; it simply states that children may work after school hours or during vacations.

- It actually contradicts the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of Children Act of 2000 that makes it punishable for anyone to procure or employ a child in a hazardous occupation.
- They also contravene the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Minimum Age Convention and UNICEF's Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which India is a signatory. According to UNICEF, a child is involved in child labour if he or she is between 5 and 11 years, does at least one hour of economic activity, or at least 28 hours of domestic work in a week. And in case of children aged between 12 and 14, 14 hours of economic activity or at least 42 hours of economic activity and domestic work per week is considered child labour.

Other challenges in implementation of laws

- The Central government provided a Rs.6 billion fund for implementing the National policy on Child Labour. Unfortunately, this budget has been cut massively in education (28 per cent) and for women and children (50 per cent) in the last two years alone, leading to the closure of 42,000 schools.
- The Education for All initiative and the Mahila Samakhya programmes have also been downsized, leading to reports of increased trafficking of tribal and minority girls from Odisha and Jharkhand.
- Taxes charged for the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaigns have reportedly been misused.
- The only funds for the rehabilitation of children are through monies and assets seized from convicted employers.

Way forward

- False consciousness needs to be broken: case study of MVF NGO in Andhra Pradesh.
- Child labour needs to be widened beyond just wage employment for otherwise there is both little recognition of the economic contribution of girls to the economy and also fewer efforts to get girls out-of-work and into school. It is also necessary to widen this definition of child labour to include all children out of school for purposes of planning and resource allocation.
- The state-specific SC sub-plans could be used to address the issue of the child labour among the SCs. Initiated during the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980–85) by the centre, the concept of the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan, is an effort to prevent the diversion of funds earmarked for SC development to other programmes of the government, and ensures that the targeted community is benefited. As there is no specific mention of child labour in the SC sub-plans today, there is a need to incorporate the issue in the plans, and devise measures accordingly to eradicate child labour.
- Of all the programmes of the Bihar government, only the State Action Plan for Elimination of Child Labour talks about the inherent caste angle. Under this particular

plan, it mandates the authorities concerned to create awareness about child labour in areas where the population of SC, ST, and backward classes is significant.

- As regards the retention of SC and ST children in schools, the provisions of the RTE Act should be enforced strictly by providing qualified teachers and maintaining an optimal pupil–teacher ratio, among others. There should be regular monitoring from the authorities concerned to ensure that quality education is imparted, and there is no scope for discrimination against any child.

Schemes

- National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme: It seeks to eliminate all forms of child labour through
- Identification and withdrawal of all children in the Project Area from child labour. PENCIL Portal: was launched for effective implementation of NCLP.

Role played by NGOs

- NGOs sensitize stakeholders to end this social evil, and make locals more vigilant to report instances of child labour at businesses. They also work for their rehabilitation.
- Many civil society organizations such as BachpanBachaoAndolan founded by Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi, Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation, Save the Children, etc. have worked to protect children from this menace.

Sexual abuse:

Statistics:

- Child Rights in India - An Unfinished Agenda' report: The report quotes National Crime Records Bureau data, which shows that the number of rapes against children in 1994 was 3,986 while in 2016 it was 16,863, accounting for a rise of 4.2 times.
- 109 children sexually abused every day in India in 2018: NCRB. 22 per cent jump in such cases from the previous year 2017.
- Acc to UNICEF, At least 120 million girls under the age of 20 – about 1 in 10 have been forced to engage in sex or perform other sexual acts, although the actual figure is likely much higher. Roughly 90 per cent of adolescent girls who report forced sex say that their first perpetrator was someone they knew, usually a boyfriend or a husband.

Causes:

- Social : low bargaining power + poverty + lack of safe spaces in institutional care for destitute children+ lack of awareness in child
- Psychological: psychopath + committed by known.

Govt provisions:

- Until 2012, the only sexual offences against children recognised by the law were covered by three sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) not specific to children.
- The only crimes registered were rape (sexual intercourse without consent—section 376), Outraging modesty of a woman (unspecified acts—section 354) and unnatural acts defined as “carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal” (anal sex, homosexuality or bestiality—section 377).
- Finally, POCSO act got instituted:

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) 2012

- This Act criminalises sexual assault, sexual harassment, and pornography involving a child (under 18 years of age) and mandates the setting up of Special Courts to expedite trials of these offences.
- POCSO 2012 does not use the term ‘rape’ more commonly used and also does not confine penetrative sex to penile penetration. POCSO is also forward thinking in many aspects, in that, the definition of sexual harassment includes repeatedly or constantly following, watching or contacting a child either directly, electronically or through other means, thus, covering incidents of child harassment via sexting or sexual cyberbullying.

- All sexual acts described under POCSO are, without exception, considered to be criminal offences if they involve a 'victim' under the age of 18 years. This holds true regardless of the issue of consent or the age of the 'perpetrator'.
- Gender neutral Act.
- Provides for mandatory reporting of sexual offences, keeping with the best international child protection standards.
- Police play an important role in the capacity of being child protectors during the investigative process.
- Provisions for the medical examination of the child in a manner designed to cause as little distress as possible
- Provision of Special Courts: that conduct the trial in-camera and without revealing the identity of the child, in a child-friendly manner.
- A case of child sexual abuse must be disposed of within one year from the date the offence is reported.
- Recognition to a wide range of form of sexual abuse against children as punishable offences.

About POCSO Amendment Act 2019

- Increases the minimum punishment (including death penalty) for penetrative sexual assault, aggravated penetrative sexual assault. The earlier amendment allowed the death penalty only in cases of sexual assault of girls below 12 years but now it will be applicable to boys also.
- Tightened the provisions to counter child pornography. While the earlier Act had punishment for storing child pornography for commercial purposes, the amendment includes punishment for possessing pornographic material in any form involving a child, even if the accused persons have failed to delete or destroy or report the same with an intention to share it.

Key Provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Rules, 2020

- Mandatory police verification of staff in any institution housing children or coming in regular contact with children like schools, care homes, sports academies etc.
- State Governments to formulate a child protection policy based on the principle of zero-tolerance to violence against children, which shall be adopted by all institutions, organizations, or any other agency working with, or coming in contact with children.
Sensitization of official and Awareness: Central Government and State Governments shall Provide periodic training (like sensitization workshops etc.) to all persons, coming in contact with the children, to sensitize them about child safety and protection.

- Orientation programme and intensive courses for police personnel and forensic experts for building their capacities in their respective roles on a regular basis.
- Reporting of child pornography: Any person who has received any pornographic material involving a child or any information regarding such pornographic material shall report the contents.

Other Initiatives taken by Government for protection of Children

- Child Protection Services (CPS): It is a centrally sponsored scheme (erstwhile Integrated Child Protection Scheme) for supporting the children in need of care and protection (CNCP).
- Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences: It is an online analytic tool for police called has been launched to monitor and track time-bound investigation on sexual assault cases in accordance with the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018.
- National Database on Sexual Offenders: It has been launched to facilitate investigation and tracking of sexual offenders across the country by law enforcement agencies.

Other steps:

- A cyber-crime portal has been launched for citizens to report obscene content.
- In order to improve investigation, steps have been taken to strengthen DNA analysis units in Central and State.
- Forensic Science Laboratories.
 - Guidelines have been notified for collection of forensic evidence in sexual assault cases and the standard composition in a Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit.

Juvenile delinquency

Juvenile Delinquency refers to participation of minors in illegal crimes. When a person deviates from the normal course of his social life his behavior is termed as Juvenile delinquency.

Statistics:

- According to the Crime in India report, there have been 31590 cases for juvenile delinquency in 2018. There has been more than 60% increase in juvenile delinquency in the last 15 years.
- 99.3% juvenile delinquent are boys.
- As per data compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau, the incidents of juvenile crime have constantly increased between 2010-2014.
- Maximum number of cases under crime against children were reported in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

Theories on Juvenile Delinquency

Strain Theory:

Strain caused by certain factors leads to crimes by juvenile.

- Strain caused by the elimination of positively valued incentives from the individual. Examples include the loss of a girl/boyfriend, divorce or separation of parents, death of a loved one, or leaving friends and moving to a new neighborhood or school.
- Strain as the demonstration of negative stimuli, such as child abuse and neglect, physical punishment, family and peer conflict, stressful life conditions, school failure, and criminal victimization.
- An example would be a juvenile who has had a goal to get a job and to buy the modern Phone, that juvenile will be saving everything money that he or she gets. But as time goes on if that juvenile finds out that he or she is not keeping up to the amount of the price of the phone, he will either steal a phone or he steal money to purchase the phone.

Subculture Theory

- This theory is made from the fact that modern societies have established a culture of separation where isolated groups of people have their own values and norms from the main society. These behaviors have introduced the arts of learning antisocial behaviors that defined by criminal studies as offense.

Differential Opportunity Theory

- If juveniles have more chances to succeed, then they would be less likely to turn to subculture groups or towards delinquency.
- It believes that the juvenile may be successful throughout school but may fail to find a profitable work or honest job. The failure to find gainful work leads the juvenile to be delinquent and not the social factors.

Juvenile delinquency is fostered by a wide range of factors which include:

1. **Poverty:** Poverty is one of the major reasons for juvenile delinquency. Juveniles indulge themselves in delinquent acts in order to meet and satisfy the primary wants of their life.
2. **Family:** It has been widely accepted that families of delinquents are characterized by discords, desertions and other problems. Such families have been pointed out as one of the main causes of delinquency.
3. **Neighbourhood:** The immediate environments of a child also affect the trend he will adopt in connection with his personality. Juvenile delinquents largely belong to areas of poor living conditions.
4. **Factors related to Mental Health:** various mental health factors contribute to juvenile delinquency. For example: Conduct disorder.
5. **Virtual world:** Constant exposure to aggression – verbal and physical – on television news, videos and games also contributes to increasing juvenile delinquency.
6. **Substance Abuse:** there is a strong relationship between substance abuse and juvenile delinquency. Substance abuse is associated with both violent and income-generating crimes by youth.
7. **Bad Peer Group:** Juvenile delinquency is often caused or worsened by peer pressure

International Instruments and Conventions dealing with Juvenile Justice

1. UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules)
2. UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (Riyadh Guidelines)
3. UN Rules for the Protection of Juvenile Deprived of their Liberty (Havana Conventions)
4. Guidelines for the Action on Children in Criminal Juvenile System (Vienna Guidelines)

Juvenile Justice System in India

Provision in the Criminal Procedure Code:

- Under Section 399 of the Indian Criminal Procedure Code (ICPC) convicted young offenders below the age of 15 could be sent to Reformatory Schools established by the State Government.
- Section 562 of the C.P.C. also permitted discharge of certain convicted offenders on probation. It also permitted their release with advice.
- Under Section 82 of the Indian Penal Code children under seven cannot be held responsible for their criminal acts.

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

It was enacted to replace the existing Juvenile Delinquency law, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 so that juveniles in conflict with law in the age group of 16-18 years, involved in heinous offences can be tried as adults.

Major Provisions of the Act:

- It empowers the Juvenile Justice Board to decide if a juvenile criminal in the age group of 16–18 should be tried as an adult or not.

Juvenile Justice Board:

The Juvenile Justice Board is composed of Principal Magistrate and two social workers, among whom one should be a woman. The Act provides that under no circumstances the Board can regulate and operate from regular court premises. The decision taken by the Principal Magistrate shall be final.

- The Act had tried to make the adoption process of orphaned, abandoned and surrendered children more streamlined while adopting some of the concepts from The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption.
- The law mandated that any person giving alcohol or drugs to a child would be punished with 7 years imprisonment or Rs. 1 Lakh fine or both. A person selling a child would be imprisoned for five years or Rs. 1 lakh fine or both.

The Debate over reducing age of Juvenile Delinquency

Arguments in favour:

- There has been a steep rise in serious crimes involving youth of 16-18 years of age and the age factor had been used as an escape from the criminal prosecution.
- It has been found that the juveniles of 16-18 age groups are involved in serious crimes and they are doing such criminal acts with full knowledge and maturity.
- Thus, while trialling juveniles, juvenility should be decided on the basis of state of mind and not the state of body solely.
- Also, to have a deterrent effect it was necessary to amend the existing law.

Arguments in opposition:

- The critics are of the view that the root of the problem needs to be addressed instead of punishment. It is not only the responsibility of the child that he/she has committed such heinous crimes but also the responsibility of the society and the government which has failed to provide a healthy childhood to the child and let them drift towards criminal activities.
- Before punishing, it should also be taken into consideration whether there are no possibilities that the child would be reformed, and whether there are chances that the child comes out as a more toughened criminal after spending years in adult jails.

Age factor in other countries- Australia as an example:

- The age for criminal responsibility in Australia is 10 years- a child is not supposed to know the difference between right and wrong if he/she is below 10 years.
- From 10 years to 14 years an accused comes under what is called 'rebuttable presumption'- by default the child is supposed to be unaware of the consequences and inherent illegality of the act committed, however the prosecution is free to rebut this understanding.
- Any individual over 14 years of age is held accountable of any crime committed by him and whether the individual is to be tried as a minor or an adult depends again on the heinousness of the crime

Issues and Challenges with Juvenile Justice in India

1. **Term of sentence:** There is no logical or scientific reason which shows that total and complete rehabilitation can be achieved by a child in conflict with the law within a maximum period of three years.
2. **Post completion of term and aftercare:** Absolute lack of implementation of the provisions of the JJ Act after a juvenile completes his sentence is a major concern. India's massive population makes it impossible to track and ensure that a juvenile once released continues with his therapy or even reports regularly to his parole officer.

3. **Juveniles in Adult jails:** National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), a number of probable juveniles are found in adult jails. Further, the police subvert the guidelines of JJ Act and lodge juveniles into adult jails.
4. **Issues with juvenile homes:**
 - Lack of trained staff and financial corruption is a major concern in juvenile homes across India
 - In major of the homes, there is complete lack of vocational training, counselling and individual care plans
 - A 2013 report by the Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR), “India’s Hell Holes: Child Sexual Assault in Juvenile Justice Homes” stated that inmates are subjected to sexual assault and exploitation, torture and ill-treatment, apart from being forced to live in inhuman conditions

Way Forward:

1. Child guidance clinics should be established in order to give appropriate treatment to the disturbed and mal-adjusted children.
2. Families should be educated to realize the importance of giving proper attention to the needs of their young children. Investments in strengthening parenting skills and support can serve as preventive measures.
3. Proper assistance to under-privileged children should be given to build in them good character and law-abiding attitude.
4. Social environment -slum areas, busy market places, gambling centres, etc., should be improved
5. The general economic standards of the people must be increased to prevent children from becoming- delinquent due to economic exigencies
6. Measures should be taken to improve conditions of juvenile homes, correctional homes through regular inspection, adequate funds and imparting training to staff.
7. The aftercare system should be strengthened to ensure that a juvenile once released continues with his therapy and is effectively rehabilitated in the society

Child marriage

Definition

- On legal terms, a marriage in which either the girl is below 18 years of age, or the boy is below 21 years of age is child marriage.
- United Nations defines child marriage as "both formal marriages and informal unions in which a girl or boy lives with a partner as if married before the age of 18." The number is based on household surveys.

Data:

- An estimated 1.5 million underage girls in India and 12 million underage girls worldwide get married each year, according to the United Nations.
- UNICEF (2017) 27% of girls in India are married before their 18th birthday and 7% are married before the age of 15. 4% of boys were married off before their 18th birthday.
- India has the highest absolute number of women married or in a union before the age of 18 in the world – 15,648,000.
- Child marriage is more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas and, in general, rates of child marriage are highest in the central and western parts of India. For instance, child marriage rates in districts of Rajasthan and Bihar range from 47% to 51%.

Problems of Child marriages:

- Child marriage affects the basic rights to freedom and life.
- It also has an impact on the reproductive health of a girl child. The rate of both maternal and infant mortality rate is high in cases of child marriage.
- Girls who get married at an early age are often more susceptible to the health risks associated with early sexual initiation and childbearing, including HIV and obstetric fistula
- Young girls who lack status, power and maturity are often subjected to domestic violence, sexual abuse and social isolation.
- Early marriage almost always deprives girls of their education or meaningful work, which contributes to persistent poverty.
- Child Marriage perpetuates an unrelenting cycle of gender inequality, sickness and poverty

- Getting the girls married at an early age when they are not physically mature, leads to highest rates of maternal and child mortality

Causes:

- **Paraya dhan syndrome** : Patriarchal social norms consider that married women and girls belong to their husband's family and women are generally seen as an economic burden.
- **Economic cost of a girl child:** girl child is considered a 'burden' on families, and traditionally the attitude of many societies has been to marry them off as soon as possible. The reason cited is that the earlier you marry off a girl child, the lower the cost of dowry.
- **Control over girls' sexuality:** Until a daughter is married, her chastity is considered to be a marker of her father's honour This motivates men to marry off their daughters early. Social pressure to marry at puberty can be enormous within certain castes.
- **Poverty:** Child marriage is more common among poorer households, with many families marrying off their daughters to reduce their perceived economic burden.
- **Level of education:** Women with no education are six times more likely to get married than those with ten years education or more.
- **Household labour:** Girls are often married off at puberty when they are deemed most "productive" and can take care of children and conduct housework. The labour of young brides is central to some rural economies.
- **Violence against girls:** Some girls are married off due to lack of safety and fear of violence against women and girls in public spaces, with many cases of being reported every day. However, a 2014 study found that child brides in India are at greater risk of sexual and physical violence within their marital home.
- **Poor law enforcement:** There are persisting legal loopholes that fuel impunity for child marriage. There is also low awareness of the law and barriers to access justice for women and girls.

Laws in INDIA

1. The previous law titled Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 had provisions only for restraining the solemnization, not for prevention or prohibition of child marriages.
2. The present law- **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** has a threefold purpose :

- a. Prevention of child marriages,
- b. Protection of children involved
- c. Prosecution of offenders.

Provisions of the Law

- It has declared child marriage to be a cognizable and non-bailable offence.
 - An injunction can be issued by the court to prohibit its solemnization and if a marriage is solemnized after the injunction, then such a marriage shall be declared as null and void.
 - This law also prescribes punishment for performing, conducting and abetting child marriage.
 - Even the parents are to be punished for promoting or permitting child marriage. The law prescribes punishment to an adult male for marrying a child and also requires the husband to provide maintenance to his minor bride till her remarriage.
3. **Exercise of option to repudiate the marriage**- Both the boy as well as the girl have the right to opt out of marriage until two years after attaining majority i.e. up to the age of 20 years for a girl and 23 years for the boy.

Shortcomings of act:

1. Burden on the child to challenge validity.

Only the child bride/groom can file a petition to annul their marriage in their personal capacity. If the petitioner is statutorily a minor as per PCMA (girl below age 18, boy below age 21), the petition can be filed only through a guardian or the next best friend of the married child (who must be an adult of 18 years or more) with the help from the child marriage prohibition officer (CMPO). In theory, this form of access to justice seems ideal, but not in practice.

2. Officers are not punished for dereliction of duty. The PCMA does not punish CMPO's for dereliction of duty. This results in a lack of accountability, thereby causing problems for children attempting to access justice.
3. The CMPOs also suffer from the failings of underreporting by ignoring or refusing to register complaints despite having knowledge of areas or communities where the practise still exists. Tragically, this leads to justice being denied for the children or complainants involved.

4. Inconsistencies with personal laws: Personal law immunities also hinder the implementation of the PCMA. Since personal laws of certain communities still allow child marriages, and the PCMA simultaneously tries to prevent them, the conflict leads to significant legal complications.

For example under Muslim personal laws, children are allowed to get married as long as they have attained puberty, around the age of 15. This is a direct contravention of the PCMA, but courts have taken opposite stances on whether an offence under the PCMA is made out or not.

The Punjab and Haryana high court in *Mohd. Samim V State of Haryana and Ors* stated that such practices are not illegal and do not fall under the purview of the PCMA.

Initiatives undertaken by Govt:

1. India has committed to eliminate child, early and forced marriage by 2030 in line with target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The government did not provide an update on progress towards this target during its Voluntary National Review at the 2017 High Level Political Forum.
2. India acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992, which sets a minimum age of marriage of 18, and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993, which obligates states to ensure free and full consent to marriage.
3. During its 2017 Universal Periodic Review, India agreed to consider recommendations to improve enforcement of legal provisions against child marriage.
4. India is also a member of the South Asian Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC), which adopted a regional action plan to end child marriage from 2015 – 2018.
5. Representatives of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), including India, asserted the Kathmandu Call to Action to End Child Marriage in Asia in 2014. As part of its commitment, India will ensure access to legal remedies for child brides and establish a uniform minimum legal age of marriage of 18. However as of 2020, the legal age for boys remains at 21 years.
6. In 2019, at the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25, India committed to address all forms of violence against all women and girls, but without mention of child marriage.

7. Previous governmental schemes have included cash incentives (such as the Dhan Laxmi scheme and the Apni beti apna dhun programme), adolescents' empowerment programmes (Kishori Shakti Yojana) and awareness-raising to encourage behaviour change related to child marriage.

Raising the minimum legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21

- The government is considering raising the minimum legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21, to reduce the prevalence of child brides (below 18) in India. This is, of course, well intentioned.
- The benefits of later marriage for women are well established. It is associated with higher nutrition levels for women and their children, lower maternal mortality, improved educational outcomes and greater financial independence.
- 102 million were married before they turned 15. Uttar Pradesh has the largest number of child brides, at 36 million, followed by Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.
- The problem, however, is not the law. Even though there is a minimum age for marriage for men, India doesn't have the same extent of this problem with child grooms. Only 4% of Indian boys/men were married before age 18. And 20% were married before the minimum legal age of 21, compared to the 27% of girls/women married before the age of 18.
- **Raising the legal age of marriage displays a lack of understanding of the reasons for the low age of marriage for women in India, which have little to do with the law.**

The real issue is that various **long-persistent cultural factors** have created a market for child brides in India. Society imposes a very high cost of raising girls on parents, especially in poor Indian families, which attempt to reduce those costs by marrying daughters off at a young age, if they prefer to invest in sons.

Child adoption

Data

- According to UNICEF, India has 29.6 million orphaned and abandoned children. SOS Children Village conducted a study in 2011 and concluded that the former category equals 4% of India's child population.
- Childline India Foundation (CIF) supported by the women and child development ministry showed that in 2017, of these 30 million children there were only 470,000 children in institutionalised care.

Adoption in India:

- Adoption in India, for a long time, fell within the ambit of personal laws, and there was no uniform legal framework that governed the adoption of children.
- Thus, adoptions were a purely religious matter, and members of certain religions specifically Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism were essentially prohibited from adopting children, as their personal laws did not permit it. Instead, they had to resort to assuming guardianship of children, under the Guardians and Wards Act, 1890.
- The only religious communities that could adopt children were Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists whose personal law, codified in the form of the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956, allowed for adoption of children.

Juvenile Justice Act

- In 2015, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (JJ Act) was enacted, which (among other things) introduced a uniform legal framework for adoption for India, allowing for non-religious adoption.
- The JJ Act has homogenized the Indian law on adoption, which was scattered and ridden with religious requirements before 2015. The JJ Act assesses any prospective adoptive parent on certain parameters, such as health, financial stability, etc.
- CARA (Central Adoption Resource Authority) is the nodal body for adoption of Indian children and is mandated to promote and facilitate in-country adoptions and regulate inter-country adoptions, as Central Authority of Government of India.

Who can adopt?

As per the Adoption Regulations 2017 and in accordance with the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, issued by the Ministry of Women and Child Development:

1. The prospective adoptive parents (PAP) “should be physically, mentally and emotionally stable, financially capable and shall not have any life-threatening medical condition.”
2. A person can adopt irrespective of their marital status and whether or not he or she has a biological son or daughter.
3. A single female can adopt a child of any gender but a single male shall not be eligible to adopt a girl child. In case of a married couple, both spouses should give their consent for adoption.
4. “No child shall be given in adoption to a couple unless they have at least two years of stable marital relationship,” mention the regulations.
5. Couples with three or more children shall not be considered for adoption “except in case of special need children”, “hard to place children” and in case of “relative adoption and adoption by step-parent”.
6. Apart from resident and non-resident Indians, even overseas citizens of India and foreign parents can adopt children from the country.

Stakeholders in adoption process

1. **Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)** - CARA ensures smooth functioning of the adoption process from time to time, issues Adoption Guidelines laying down procedures and processes to be followed by different stakeholders of the adoption programme.
2. **State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA)** - State Adoption Resource Agency acts as a nodal body within the State to promote and monitor adoption and non-institutional care in coordination with Central Adoption Resource Authority.
3. **Specialised Adoption Agency (SAA)** - Specialised Adoption Agency (SAA) is recognized by the State Government under sub-section 4 of section 41 of the Act for the purpose of placing children in adoption.
4. **Authorised Foreign Adoption Agency (AFAA)**- Authorised Foreign Adoption Agency is recognised as a foreign social or child welfare agency that is authorised by Central Adoption Resource Authority on the recommendation of the concerned Central Authority or Government Department of that country for coordinating all matters relating to adoption of an Indian child by a citizen of that country.
5. **District Child Protection Unit (DCPU)** - District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) means a unit set up by the State Government at district level under Section 61A of the Act. It identifies orphan, abandoned and surrendered children in the district and gets them declared legally free for adoption by the Child Welfare Committee.

Hague Adoption Convention

- **The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (or Hague Adoption Convention)** is an international convention dealing with international adoption, child laundering, and child trafficking in

an effort to protect those involved from the corruption, abuses, and exploitation which sometimes accompanies international adoption.

- The Convention has been considered crucial because it provides a formal international and intergovernmental recognition of intercountry adoption to ensure that adoptions under the Convention will generally be recognized and given effect in other party countries.

Current trends in adoption in India:

1. While India's gender ratio might be skewed, but for parents who are looking to adopt, a girl child is slowly becoming their first preference. Data released by the government shows that between 2015 and 2018, more girls were adopted from Indian adoption centres than boys. Of all the children who had been placed in adoption over the last three years, 6,962 were girls and 4,687 boys.
2. As per recent data released by CARA: out of the 6,650 children adopted by Indian families between 2017-19, 4 per cent or 278 were returned.

Reason : Disruption due to non-adjustment with adopted children due to age and a limitation to carry desired socialisation.

Reasons for low adoption

- There aren't enough children available for adoption because the ratio of abandoned children to children in institutionalised care is lopsided.
- Chicken and egg situation. Most Indians have a skewed perception of adoption as they want "their genes, blood and lineage in their child."
- Social stigma.

Impact of Covid 19 on children

UNICEF : Recently, the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** has released the report "**Averting a lost Covid generation**", which highlights significant and growing consequences of **Covid-19** on children.

Key highlights of report:

- Children and adolescents account for 1 in 9 reported Covid-19 infections.
- As of the beginning of November 2020, children and adolescents accounted for 11% of the 25.7 million infections reported across 87 countries.
- It estimated that a third of the countries analysed, witnessed a drop of at least 10% in coverage of health services and there was a 40% decline in the coverage of nutrition services for women and children across 135 countries.
- As of October 2020, 265 million children were still missing out on school meals globally.
- 65 countries reported a decrease in-home visits by social workers in September 2020, compared to 2019.

India specific Highlights

- **Infections in Under 20:** As per data from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on the dashboard of the National Centre for Disease Control, 11.89% of Covid-19 cases in India are in under 20.
- **Education:** 1.5 million school closures have impacted 247 million children enrolled in elementary and secondary education and 28 million children who were attending pre-school education in Anganwadi Centres.
- **Nutrition:** An estimated 20 million children under 5 years of age are suffering from wasting (low weight for height), over 40 million children are chronically malnourished and more than half of the Indian women aged 15-49 years are anaemic.

The pandemic has further exposed the fragility of children, less by the virus itself but much more by the indirect and long-term fallout.

- **Newborn Mortality:** Covid-19 poses a grave threat to the gains made by India in the Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) which saw improvements in recent years.

NMR is defined as the 'number of deaths during the first 28 completed days of life per 1,000 live births in a given year or period'.

IMR is defined as the 'number of deaths of children under the age of 1 year per 1000 live births for a given year.'

- **Sanitation:** The socio-economic stress and migration resulting due to the Covid-19 put access to toilets and the practice of using them at risk.
- The schools which offered improved access to and quality of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities are closed and the facilities are not accessed.

Children account for one in 9 cases: UNICEF

‘COVID-19 impacting critical services’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Children and adolescents account for one in nine reported COVID-19 infections across 87 countries, according to an analysis by UNICEF, which highlights the trifecta of threats due to COVID-19 facing children, including the disruption of essential services and rise in poverty and inequality.

The report was released on World Children’s Day on Friday and coincides with nearly one year of the COVID-19 spread. It seeks to reject the myth that children are not affected by the infection and estimates that children and adolescents account for 11 per cent of the 25.7 million infections reported across 87 countries until November 3. Of these cases, more infections occurred among adolescents ages 10-19 compared to children 0-9, and among males compared to females (as is true at older ages).

“Children face a trifecta of threats: direct consequences of the disease itself, interruption in essential services and increasing pover-

ty and inequality. Unless the global community urgently changes priorities, the potential of this generation of young people may well be lost,” the report titled “Averting a Lost COVID Generation” says.

Much worse though is the impact of disruption of critical services that support and safeguard children such as vaccination and maternal and newborn care, which could aggravate mortality and morbidity, which will further increasing their vulnerability to COVID-19 and other diseases.

As a result, there could be an estimated 20 lakh additional child deaths under age 5, and 2 lakh additional stillbirths in the first year of the pandemic.

The UNICEF calls upon governments to implement a six-point plan to secure the future of children, which include bridging the digital divide to ensure all children are able to access school learning and guaranteed nutrition and health services. It also appeals that measures be taken to curb rise in child poverty.

UN Report : impact of Covid 19 on children

- According to the recently released UN Report on the Impact of Covid-19 on Children, **almost 24 million children could drop out or not have access to school next year due to the economic impact of Covid-19.**

Key Highlights

- **Economic:** An estimated **42-66 million children could fall into** extreme poverty as a result of pandemic.
- The economic loss might reach **16,000 USD of lost earnings over a student’s lifetime**, translating over time into 10 trillion USD of lost earnings globally.

- **Learning:** 188 countries have imposed countrywide school closures, affecting more than 1.5 billion children and youth.

More than two-thirds of countries have introduced a national distance learning platform, but among low-income countries the share of distance learning is only 30%.

Online learning is not accessible for poor children, children from remote and conflict areas and children with disabilities.

A loss of learning by one-third (equivalent to a three-month school closure) during Grade 3 might result in 72% of students falling so far behind that by Grade 10 they will have dropped out or will not be able to learn anything in school.

- **Survival:** Economic hardship experienced by families as a result of the global economic downturn could result in **hundreds of thousands of additional child deaths in 2020.**

This will reverse the last 2 to 3 years of progress in reducing infant mortality within a single year.

- **Health:** Rising malnutrition is expected as 368.5 million children across 143 countries **rely on** school meals for a reliable source of daily nutrition.

There is a reduced access to essential reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health interventions.

Suspension of all polio vaccination campaigns worldwide and measles immunization campaigns in at least 23 countries will set back the decades-long effort to eliminate these diseases.

The effects of physical distancing measures and movement restrictions on children's **mental health** represent another cause for concern.

- **Uneven Distribution of Impact:** The Covid-19 Pandemic has increased the existing socioeconomic disparities.
 1. During the second quarter of 2020, 86% of children at the primary level have been effectively out of school in poor countries, compared to just 20% in highly developed countries.
 2. The Covid-19 crisis is likely to increase the financing gap between education budgets and the money available to reach the Sustainable Development Goal of quality education by up to one-third.

3. The low and middle incomes already faced a USD 148-billion of the said financial gap.
 4. Apart from the poor children, other vulnerable groups of children like migrants, the displaced, refugees, minorities, slum-dwellers, children living with disabilities, children living in refugee settlements, and children in institutions are likely to face a more severe impact.
 5. The impact of Covid-19 is going to be more damaging for girls than boys, widening gender inequality.
 6. Earlier this year, the Global Education Monitoring Report, 2020 was released by UNESCO which highlighted that the Covid-19 had worsened the inequalities in education systems worldwide.
- **Safety:** Lockdowns and shelter in place measures come with heightened risk of children witnessing or suffering violence and abuse.

Children's reliance on online platforms for distance learning has also increased their risk of exposure to inappropriate content and online predators.

Susceptibility to child marriage, early pregnancy and gender-based violence will also increase.

Transgenders in India

Who are transgender?

- Transgender people are individuals of any age or sex whose appearance, personal characteristics, or behaviors differ from stereotypes about how men and women are 'supposed' to be.
- In contemporary usage, transgender has become an 'umbrella' term that is used to describe a wide range of identities and experiences, including but not limited to transsexual people.
- The 2011 census put the total transgender population in India at 4,87,203.
- LGBTQIA+ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit, and the countless affirmative ways in which people choose to self-identify.
- The term intersex is often confused with transgender but the two in-fact have very different meanings.
 - Transgender: Individuals who identify as transgender or transsexual have a gender that is different from the one traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.
 - Intersex: It refers to people born with biological or physical characteristics that are more diverse than stereotypical male or female bodies.

Challenges faced by Transgender:

- Social: They are subject to extreme forms of social ostracisation and exclusion from basic dignity and human rights.
- Rejection of Entry directly or indirectly at some Public Places like Hospitals, Hotels, Malls, Restaurants, Dance Floors, Theaters, Shopping Complexes.
- More often, transgender children or young individuals begin their journey alone and in search of individuals of their kind, a journey that is marred by unspeakable hardships and abuse.
- School education of most transgender people either remains incomplete or non-existent. The lack of basic schooling is a direct result of bullying and, hence, transgender persons are forced to leave schools (most of our schools remain unequipped to handle children with alternate sexual identities).

- They remain highly vulnerable to gender-based violence.
- Economic: Often ignored as a menace to society, they are now only visible on the streets and localities where they are found begging, never as a part of the mainstream.
- Due to no education and lack of skills they do not find any gainful employment
- Poverty– In too many cases, this lack of legal protection translates into unemployment for transgender people.
- Health: As a direct result of their acute mistreatment, vilification, ostracisation, and dehumanization, they also remain highly vulnerable to fatal communicable diseases like HIV-AIDS.
- Political rights: They have no representation in politics and till 2014, they were not a vote bank.

Evolution :

- Historians have long argued that pre-colonial Indian society did not criminalise same-sex relationships, nor did it view such relations as immoral or sinful.
- Transgenders were appointed to guard Royal harem.
- However, societal homophobia was introduced to India by the European colonists and the subsequent enactment of Section 377.
- Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which entered into force in 1861, and made it an offence for a person to voluntarily have "carnal intercourse against the order of nature."
- Scholars have also argued that the original intention of Section 377 was to act as a means by which the British Raj could further police and control the body of the colonial subject. In colonial Victorian era morality, these subjects were seen as erotically perverse and in need of the imposition.
- In 1871, the British labeled the hijra population as a "criminal tribe".

Struggle for recognition by transgender

- Even when article : 14, 15, 16 provided for equality : on ground there was discrimination.
- The All India Hijra Kalyan Sabha fought for over a decade to get voting rights, which they finally got in 1994. But were allowed to be identified as either male or female. But due to ambiguity in recognition by both trans as well as authorities. On the ground nothing happened.

- Shabnam Mausi became the first transgender MLA in 1998. She was elected as the member of the Madhya Pradesh State Legislative Assembly. (NO Trans MP uptill now)
- In 2009, appropriate directions were issued by the Election Commission to all provinces to amend the format of the registration forms to include an option of “others”. This enabled transsexual people to tick the column if they didn’t want to be identified as either male or female.

Judicial Pronouncements Related to Transgender

- **Naz Foundation vs. Govt. of NCT of Delhi (2009)**
 - Delhi High Court struck off section 377, legalising consensual homosexual activities between adults.
 - Violative of Articles 21, 14 and 15 of the Constitution.
- **Suresh Kumar Koushal Case (2013)**
 - SC overturned the previous judgment by Delhi High Court (2009) that decriminalised homosexual acts and criminalised homosexuality once again.
 - SC argued that in 150 years, less than 200 persons had been prosecuted under Section 377.
 - Therefore, "plight of sexual minorities" could not be used as an argument for deciding constitutionality of law.
 - Further, SC ruled that it was for the legislature to look into desirability of deleting section 377 of IPC.
- **National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India (2014)**
 - In this judgment, the Supreme Court held that transgender people be treated as ‘third gender’ for the purpose of safeguarding their rights under Part III of our Constitution and the laws made by the Parliament and the State Legislature.
 - It upheld transgender persons’ right to decide their self-identified gender and directed the Centre and State Governments grant legal recognition of their gender identity.
 - It also directed them to treat transgenders as socially and educationally backward classes of citizens [OBCs] and extend all kinds of reservation in cases of admission in educational institutions and for public appointments.
- **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India (2017)**
 - SC ruled that Fundamental Right to Privacy is intrinsic to life and liberty and thus, comes under Article 21 of the Indian constitution.
 - SC declared that bodily autonomy was an integral part of the right to privacy.
 - This bodily autonomy has within its ambit the sexual orientation of an individual.

- **Navtej Singh Johar vs. Union Of India (2018)**

- Decriminalised homosexuality.
- Dismissed the position taken by SC in Suresh Kumar Koushal case (2013) that the LGBTQ community constitute a minuscule minority and so there was no need to decriminalise homosexual sex.
- Supreme Court has stated Section 377 as “irrational, indefensible and manifestly arbitrary”.
- SC noted the importance of individual liberty over community preferences. SC said that “Denial of self-expression is like death”.
- Sexual autonomy is an important pillar and inseparable facet of individual liberty.

Transgender act :

Provisions :

- Definition of a transgender person: The Bill defines a transgender person as one whose gender does not match the gender assigned at birth. It includes trans-men and trans-women, persons with intersex variations, gender-queers, and persons with socio-cultural identities
- Prohibition against discrimination: The Bill prohibits the discrimination against a transgender person, including denial of service or unfair treatment in relation to: (i) education; (ii) employment; (iii) healthcare; (iv) access to, or enjoyment of goods, facilities, opportunities available to the public; (v) right to movement; (vi) right to reside, rent, or otherwise occupy property; (vii) opportunity to hold public or private office; and (viii) access to a government or private establishment in whose care or custody a transgender person is.
- Right of residence: Every transgender person shall have a right to reside and be included in his household. If the immediate family is unable to care for the transgender person, the person may be placed in a rehabilitation centre, on the orders of a competent court.
- Employment: No government or private entity can discriminate against a transgender person in employment matters, including recruitment, and promotion. Every establishment is required to designate a person to be a complaint officer to deal with complaints in relation to the Act.
- Education: Educational institutions funded or recognised by the relevant government shall provide inclusive education, sports and recreational facilities for transgender persons, without discrimination.
- Health care: The government must take steps to provide health facilities to transgender persons including separate HIV surveillance centres, and sex reassignment surgeries. The government shall review medical curriculum to address health issues of transgender persons, and provide comprehensive medical insurance schemes for them.
- Certificate of identity for a transgender person: A transgender person may make an application to the District Magistrate for a certificate of identity, indicating the gender as ‘transgender’. A

revised certificate may be obtained only if the individual undergoes surgery to change their gender either as a male or a female.

- Welfare measures by the government: The Bill states that the relevant government will take measures to ensure the full inclusion and participation of transgender persons in society. It must also take steps for their rescue and rehabilitation, vocational training and self-employment, create schemes that are transgender sensitive, and promote their participation in cultural activities.
- Offences and penalties: The Bill recognizes the following offences against transgender persons: (i) forced or bonded labour (excluding compulsory government service for public purposes), (ii) denial of use of public places, (iii) removal from household, and village, (iv) physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic abuse. Penalties for these offences vary between six months and two years, and a fine.
- National Council for Transgender persons (NCT): The NCT will consist of: (i) Union Minister for Social Justice (Chairperson); (ii) Minister of State for Social Justice (Vice- Chairperson); (iii) Secretary of the Ministry of Social Justice; (iv) one representative from ministries including Health, Home Affairs, and Human Resources Development.

Criticism:

- Not consultative.
- No right to self identification.
- Definition is restrictive
- No stringent punishment. The Bill makes it an offence to compel transgender persons to beg or do forced or bonded labour (excluding compulsory government service for public purposes); to deny them the use of public space or place of residence; and to indulge in abuse, physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic, of transgenders. These offences will attract imprisonment of six months to two years and a fine. The comparatively mild punishments have disappointed the activists.
- it makes sex reassignment surgery (SRS) mandatory for asserting one's gender as male or female in spite of the pronouncement by the Supreme Court that any insistence on SRS for declaring one's gender is immoral and illegal.
- It does not make provision for affirmative action in employment or education despite the Supreme Court's mandate in National Legal Services Authority NALSA v. Union of India (UOI) case (2014).

Pros and cons

SALIENT FEATURES	COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions do not differentiate between transgenders, transsexuals, intersex persons and genderqueer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community differentiates between transgender, transsexual and intersex persons and dismisses the 'one-solution fits all' idea
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibition against discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, public facilities etc. Also prevents forced labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of enforceability dilutes provision. Lived experiences riddled with discrimination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of identity can be obtained at the DM's office and a revised certificate is to be obtained if sex is changed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shuns provision as impinging on their right to self-determination. Fear it'll lead to bureaucratic discrimination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government welfare measures and provisions of healthcare, including HIV surveillance centres, and sex reassignment surgeries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step forward but medical community lacks knowledge of transgender bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgender persons may only change their first name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer to take Guru's name since many have severed ties with their birth family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up of a National Council for Transgender persons (NCT), including various Ministers and five transgender persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire greater representation in decision making that affects them directly

Contemporary developments:

1. Across India, students are bullied because of their sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), forcing many to drop out from schools.
 - o UNESCO's New Delhi office has teamed up with Sahodaran, a male sexual health initiative in Chennai, to conduct a community-based study on SOGI-based bullying in Tamilnadu.



Initiatives for reducing SOGI based violence:

- UGC (University Grant Commission) recognized gender identity and sexual orientation as grounds for ragging in 2016.
 - NGO SAATHII has been studying violence against SOGI in partnership with LGBT community groups such as AMANA and ETA in Manipur, VIKALP in Gujarat, Queerala in Kerala and Nirangal in Tamilnadu.
2. Recently, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched the National Portal for Transgender Persons and has inaugurated Garima Greh, a shelter home for transgender persons.
- National Portal for Transgender Persons:
 - It has been launched in consonance with the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020.
 - It would help transgenders in digitally applying for a certificate and identity card from anywhere in the country, thus preventing any physical interaction with officials.
 - It will help them track the status of application, rejection, grievance redressal, etc. which will ensure transparency in the process.
 - The issuing authorities are also under strict timelines to process the applications and issue certificates and I-cards without any necessary delays.
 - Garima Greh:
 - It has been opened in Vadodara, Gujarat and will be run in association with the Lakshya Trust, a community-based organisation entirely run by the transgenders.
 - The Scheme of 'Shelter Home for Transgender Persons' includes shelter facility, food, clothing, recreational facilities, skill development opportunities, yoga, physical fitness, library facilities, legal support, technical advise for gender transition and surgeries, capacity building of trans-friendly organizations, employment, etc.
3. Recently, the first national conference on intersex human rights was organised by Srishti Madurai in partnership with Intersex Asia in New Delhi.

Way forward:

- In a landmark judgment the Indian Supreme Court has held that the 'Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Law in Relation to Issues of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity' should be applied as a matter of national law.
- A multi-pronged approach is needed on a war footing in the form of mass awareness campaigns, generating avenues for dignified employment, gender sensitization and affirmative action. Only then can the efforts of the Election Commission and the judiciary for ensuring inclusive elections in the world's largest democracy also result in a meaningful and inclusive democracy.
 - For example, Kerala's move to secure places in higher education for transgenders is among the first initiatives in the country to help support their progress.
- The government should also move beyond focusing on individual-level HIV prevention activities and address the structural determinants of HIV risks and mitigate the impact of such risks.
- Implement stigma and discrimination reduction measures at various levels through a variety of ways: mass media awareness for the general public to focused training and sensitization for police and health care providers.
- Ensure greater involvement of vulnerable communities including Hijras/TG women in policy formulation and program development.

Legal Measures

- Like the Women's Reservation Bill, a bill for representation of transgenders in Parliament can give voice to this community and improve their quality of life quality," she added.
- 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.
- There should be a special legal protection against any form of discrimination inflicted by both state and civil society which is very akin to the offence of practicing untouchability.
- The Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act, 1956, as has been pointed out earlier, is used less for preventing trafficking than for intimidating those who are the most vulnerable. This law needs to be reformed with a clear understanding of how the state is to deal with those engaged in sex work.
- Civil rights under law such as the right to get a passport, ration card, make a will, inherit property and adopt children must be available to all regardless of change in gender / sex identities.

Police Reforms

- The police administration should appoint a standing committee comprising Station House Officers and human rights and social activists to promptly investigate reports of gross abuses by the police
- The police administration should adopt transparency in their dealings with hijras
- Protection and safety should be ensured for hijras and kothis to prevent rape in police custody and in jail. Hijras should not be sent into male cells with other men in order to prevent harassment, abuse, and rape.
- The police at all levels should undergo sensitization workshops by human rights groups/queer groups in order to break down their social prejudices and to train them to accord hijras and kothis the same courteous and humane treatment as they should towards the general public.

Other reforms

- 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
- 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.

Innovative approach :

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has roped in transgender model Bishesh Huiem to generate awareness among the transgender community before the General Elections.
- Pride Station of Noida Metro to sensitise people towards transgender community.

Elderly in India:

According to the law, a "senior citizen" means any person being a citizen of India, who has attained the age of sixty years or above.

Data

- According to the Population Census 2011 there are nearly 104 million elderly persons (aged 60 years or above) in India; 53 million females and 51 million males.
- A report released by the United Nations Population Fund and HelpAge India suggests that the number of elderly persons is expected to grow to 173 million by 2026.
- India is ageing much faster than previously thought and is expected to have nearly 20% population of the world's 60 years and above by 2050 with the largest number of older adults in the world."
- While the southern states (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu) may be considered the biggest drivers of aging in India, other Indian states (notably Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, and Punjab) are also experiencing an elderly population boom, largely in rural areas.
- By 2050, women over 60 years would exceed the number of elderly men by 18.4 million, which would result in a unique characteristic of 'feminisation' of the elderly population in India as is being experienced in many provinces of China. In fact, the two most populous nations will together contribute to 38 percent of the global elderly population.

Feminisation of elderly

- There is a feminization of the elderly population; according to the 2001 census, the gender ratio among the Indian elderly aged 60 years and older is 1,028 females for 1,000 males.
- Studies have shown that widows are disproportionately vulnerable to disability, illness, and poor healthcare utilization due to a number of mobility, employment, property, and financial constraints.

Challenges

- Traditionally, respect for elderly was an integral part of the Indian value system. However, such values are disappearing due to changing family structure, urbanization and modernization. As a result, elderly population is facing inevitable challenges to live their life respectfully.

- Lack of emotional support, neglect by the family members, loss of dignity, maltreatment, disrespect, illness due to ageing are the most of the traitorous conditions which elderly are facing.
- Social mores inhibit women from remarrying, resulting in an increased likelihood of women ending up alone.
- Social bias often results in unjust allocation of resources, neglect, abuse, exploitation, gender-based violence, lack of access to basic services and prevention of ownership of assets. Ageing women are more likely to get excluded from social security schemes due to lower literacy and awareness levels.

Social stigma

- According to WHO, The stigma of aging, as well as the health and social conditions the elderly commonly face (such as dementia, depression, incontinence, or widowhood), is another social barrier to access of health, manifested in the Indian case in a unique way.
- **“Dependency anxiety”** was a common phenomenon among the elderly, i.e., elderly felt the need to curtail their dependence upon the family and felt anxious about informing them about their health problems.

Availability, Accessibility and Affordability of Health Care

- Due to the ever increasing trend of nuclear families, elder care management is getting more difficult especially for working adult children
- Employer insurance and pension schemes are available only to as low as 9% of rural males and 41.9% of urban males who are in the formal sector; among females, the figures are lower still (3.9% rural, 38.5% urban).
- The rest of the workforce comprises casual and self-employed workers who are not entitled to formal retirement benefits and, in order to afford healthcare in their early years, face the **paradoxical challenges of remaining both healthy and employed in old age.**
- Unlike most developed countries, Emergency Response infrastructure for senior citizens is ill-developed, including availability of public ambulances for hospitalization.

Lack of Infrastructure

- Lack of physical infrastructure is a major deterrent to providing comfort to the aged.
- Most of the government facilities such as day care centres, old age residential homes, counselling and recreational facilities are urban based.

Economic Dependency

- As per the 52nd round of the National Sample Survey Organization, nearly half of the elderly are fully dependent on others, while another 20 percent are partially dependent for their economic needs. About 85% of the aged had to depend on others for their day to day maintenance.

Domestic violence:-

- Domestic violence refers to the violence which elderly at home are subjected to by their children and family members. The main causes of violence against elderly are – children being hesitant in bearing the expenses of the old parents, emotionally victimising the olds and beating them to death to get rid of them. One of the very common reasons includes torture for property grabbing.
- In India, domestic violence against elderly largely goes unreported. It is because of the dependency of olds on their children and having a fear of not being looked after or even ousted if the violence is revealed outside the home.
- Women are the largest vulnerable groups who are in disadvantageous positions all over the globe. Biologically women live longer than men. According to Family welfare statistics in India, 2011, life expectancy at birth for females is only 64.4 years compared to 62.6 years for their male counterparts.

Lack of Social Support

- The elderly in India are much more vulnerable because of the less government spending on social security systems. The elderly in urban areas rely primarily on hired domestic help to meet their basic needs

Changing Family Structure

- The traditional Indian society with an age-old joint family system has been instrumental in safeguarding the social and economic security of the elderly people. However with the emerging prevalence of nuclear family set-ups in recent years, the elderly are likely to be exposed to emotional, physical, financial insecurity in the years to come.

Isolation

- Most senior citizens who live alone suffer due to lack of companionship – sometimes exacerbated by lack of mobility due to ill health.

Government Schemes with Senior Citizen Benefits

Social Security

- Social security is defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as ‘the protection which society provides for its members, through a series of public measures to prevent the social and economic distress
- Social security is a basic human right, which was recognized in the **United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The Right to life, recognised as a fundamental right by Article 21 of the Constitution of India**, implies the Right to live with human dignity. It encompasses not only the security regarding the basic human needs of food, clothing and shelter, but also health security.
- As stated in the **Directive Principles of State Policy, Article 41 of the Indian Constitution** enjoins the state ‘to make effective provision, within the limits of its economic capacity, for public assistance in case of unemployment, sickness, old age, disablement and other cases of undeserved want’.

Varishta Medclaim Policy: The Varishta Medclaim Policy is available to senior citizens aged between 60 and 80 years. It offers sum insured options of Rs 1 Lakh and Rs 2 Lakh for treatment of critical illness and hospitalisation costs.

Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS): Any person above 60 years of age can open an account under SCSS, starting with a minimum deposit of Rs 1,000 and maximum up to Rs 15 Lakhs. One is eligible for claim tax deductions up to Rs 1.5 Lakh under Section 80C for investments made in this scheme. However, the interest amount is taxable.

Pension Schemes: Schemes such as the **Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY)** by the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India aim at providing social security to the elderly. The Varishta Pension Bima Yojana is another pension scheme provided by the Ministry of Finance and managed by LIC.

National Social Assistance Scheme

The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Government of India that provides financial assistance to the elderly, widows and persons with disabilities in the form of social pensions.

NSAP comprises of five schemes, namely:

1. Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS).
2. Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS).
3. Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS).
4. National Family Benefit Scheme NFBS).
5. Annapurna

Vayoshreshtha Sammans - A Scheme of National Award for Senior Citizens.

- Scheme of National Award for Senior Citizens (Vayoshreshtha Sammans) was launched in 2005 and is dedicated to senior citizens. The Scheme is funded by the Central government. This scheme is applicable for eminent senior citizens and institutes involved in rendering distinguished services for the cause of elderly persons.

Way forward

- Apart from developing schemes to ensure income security for the elderly, building an ecosystem of caregivers, we also need to create mechanisms that will improve their quality of life. Not only must the government launch its own preparatory mechanisms, it

must also encourage startups working to create technologically powered solutions for the elderly.

- **Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (Mipaa) has a bold agenda** focused on three priority areas: older persons and development; advancing health and well-being into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments. As a signatory to Mipaa, India has the responsibility to formulate and implement public policy on population ageing.
- Gender and social concerns of elderly, particularly elderly women, must be integrated at the policy level. The elderly, especially women, should be represented in decision making.
- Benefits of social schemes must percolate to the grassroots. Increasing social/widow pension and its universalisation is critical for expanding the extent and reach of benefits.
- Renewed efforts should be made for raising widespread awareness and access to social security schemes such as National Old Age Pension and Widow Pension Scheme. Provisions in terms of special incentives for elderly women, disabled, widowed should also be considered.

Impact and Challenges faced by elders in time of Covid-19

- The fatality rate for older people is higher compared to other age groups. So, the pandemic is putting elders at a higher risk of discrimination, loneliness, and poverty besides the threat to life.
- HelpAge India released a report “The Elder Story: Ground Reality during Covid-19”, surveying 5,099 elders across 17 states and four Union Territories stating that 65 percent elders whose incomes had been affected, 67 percent were in the age group of 60-69 years, a glaring 28 percent in the ‘old-old’ category (70-79 years) and five percent in the ‘oldest-old’ age group (80 plus).
- The elderly not only feared for their lives but also the stigma attached to the infection. The lockdown fanned their fears further,
- The report also showed that 62 percent of the elderly respondents were found suffering from chronic diseases such as asthma, cancer, hypertension; diabetes, etc. 53 percent were rural elders and 47 percent were urban elders. The Lockdown has greatly affected the livelihood and income of the rural population, especially the elders who have no savings and no one to take care of them.

Disabled population

Data

- Census 2001 has revealed that equivalent to 2.21% of the population is disabled in India.
- Across the country, the highest number of disabled has been reported from the state of Uttar Pradesh (3.6 million). Significant numbers of disabled have also been reported from the state like Bihar (1.9 million), West Bengal (1.8million), Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra (1.6 million each).
- Tamil Nadu is the only state, which has a higher number of disabled females than males. Among the states, Arunachal Pradesh has the highest proportion of disabled males (66.6%) and lowest proportion of females disabled.

Different types of disabilities

- Impairments: abnormalities of body structure and appearance and with organ or system function resulting from any cause; in principle that represent disturbances at organ level
- Disability : reflecting the consequences of impairment in terms of functional performance and activity by the individual ; in principle they represent disturbances at the level of individual
- Handicap : disadvantages experienced by individuals as a result of impairments and disabilities.

Problems Faced

Social: Discrimination/Social Exclusion:

- Negative attitudes held by the families of the disabled, and often the disabled themselves, hinder disabled persons from taking an active part in the family, community or workforce.
- Differently-abled people face discrimination in everyday life. People suffering from mental illness or mental retardation face the worst stigma and are subject to severe social exclusion.
- **Inspiration porn:** Inspiration porn refers to portrayals of persons with disabilities in which they are presented as being inspiring simply because the person has a disability. These portrayals are criticized because they are created with the intent of making non-disabled viewers feel better about themselves in comparison to the individual portrayed. Rather than recognizing the humanity of persons with disabilities, inspiration porn turns them into objects of inspiration for a non-disabled audience.
- **Supercrip:** The supercrip trope refers to instances when the media reports on or portrays a disabled person who has made a noteworthy achievement; but center on their disability rather than what they actually did. They are portrayed as awe-inspiring for being exceptional compared to others with the same or similar conditions.

- **Disabled villain:** Characters in fiction that bear physical or mental markers of difference from perceived societal norms are frequently positioned as villains within a text. Disabled people's visible differences from the abled majority are meant to evoke fear in audiences that can perpetuate the mindset of disabled people being a threat to individual or public interests and well-being.

Education:

- The education system is not inclusive. Inclusion of children with mild to moderate disabilities in regular schools has remained a major challenge.
- There are various issues such as availability of special schools, access to schools, trained teachers, and availability of educational materials for the disabled. Further, reservations for the disabled in higher educational institutions has not been fulfilled in many instances

Employment:

- Even though many disabled adults are capable of productive work, disabled adults have far lower employment rates than the general population.
- The situation is even worse in the private sector, where much less disabled are employed

Accessibility

- Physical accessibility in buildings, transportation, access to services etc still remain a major challenge.

Inadequate data and statistics:

- The lack of rigorous and comparable data and statics further hinders inclusion of persons with disabilities. The major issues with collection of data and measuring disability are:
 - Coverage: Different purposes require different disability data
 - Reluctance in reporting disability as disability is considered to be a stigma in many places/societies
 - Poor implementation of policies and schemes hinders the inclusion of disabled persons. Though various acts and schemes have been laid down with an aim to empower the disabled, their enforcement face many challenges.

Challenges in employment

- There are several barriers for people with disabilities to enter the labour market. The challenges can range from their lack of education and training or a lack of financial resources which limit access to labour markets.
- Other reasons include the nature of the workplace or occupation and employer-perceptions of disabled people.
- Negative attitudes toward employees with disabilities can result in discrimination. These negative attitudes stem from ignorance, misunderstanding, stereotyping, backlash and

fear. Companies, agencies, and organizations are composed of individuals with their own attitudes and beliefs about people with disabilities.

- Lack of self-esteem and confidence: Some persons with disability have low self-expectations about their ability to be employed and may not try to find employment. The social isolation of persons with disability restricts their access to social networks, especially of friends and family members that could help in finding them employment.

Constitutional provisions

- Part-III of the Constitution provides for a set of six Fundamental Rights to all the citizens (and in a few cases to non citizens also). These include – Right to Equality; Right to Freedom; Right against Exploitation; Right to Freedom of Religion; Cultural and Educational Rights and Right to Constitutional Remedies. All these rights are also available to the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) even though no specific mention of such persons appears in this Part of the Constitution.
- Article 41 of Constitution of India: provides that the State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement.

Relief to the disabled is a State subject. Besides, the following provisions in the Constitution take care of the issues pertaining to PwDs:

- (i) **Eleventh Schedule to Article 243-G:** “Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded.”
- (ii) **Twelfth Schedule to Article 243-W:** “Safeguarding the interests of weaker sections of society, including the handicapped and mentally retarded.”

Measures

- **The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2006)** recognizes that Persons with Disabilities are valuable human resource for the country and seeks to create an environment that provides equal opportunities, protection of their rights, etc
- A number of International commitments and guidelines came into effect in the recent past targeting the welfare of the disabled persons. India is a signatory to the ‘**Declaration on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asia Pacific Region**’ (2000).
- India has ratified the ‘**UN Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities**’ (2008). India is also a signatory to the ‘**Biwako Millennium Framework**’ (2002) for action towards an inclusive, barrier free and rights based society.
 - The ‘**Biwako Plus Five**’ (2007): further efforts towards an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific’ added the emphasis.

- **The Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real”** for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (2012) provides the Asian and Pacific region and the world with the first set of regionally agreed disability inclusive development Goals.
- **The Sustainable Development Goals (2015)** pledges for ‘leaving no one behind’. Recognizing that the dignity of the human being is fundamental, the SDGs wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society and to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 is the disability legislation passed by the Indian Parliament to fulfill its obligation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which India ratified in 2007.
- The Act replaced the existing Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

The salient features of the Act are:-

- Responsibility has been cast upon the appropriate governments to take effective measures to ensure that the persons with disabilities enjoy their rights equally with others. **Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.**
- The types of disabilities have been increased from existing 7 to 21 and the Central Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities.
- **Speech and Language Disability and Specific Learning Disability have been added for the first time.** Acid Attack Victims have been included. Dwarfism, muscular dystrophy have been indicated as separate classes of specified disability.
- The New categories of disabilities also included three blood disorders, Thalassemia, Hemophilia and Sickle Cell disease.
- Additional benefits such as reservation in higher education, government jobs, reservation in allocation of land, poverty alleviation schemes etc. have been provided for persons with benchmark disabilities and those with high support needs.
- Every child with **benchmark disability** between the age group of 6 and 18 years shall have the right to free education. Persons with "benchmark disabilities" are defined as those certified to have at least 40 per cent of the disabilities specified above.
- Government funded educational institutions as well as the government recognized institutions will have to provide inclusive education to the children with disabilities.
- For strengthening the Prime Minister's Accessible India Campaign, stress has been given to ensure accessibility in public buildings (both Government and private) in a prescribed time-frame.
- Reservation in vacancies in government establishments has been increased from 3% to 4% for certain persons or class of persons with benchmark disability.
- The Act provides for grant of guardianship by District Court under which there will be joint decision – making between the guardian and the persons with disabilities.

The New Act will bring our law in line with the **United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**, to which India is a signatory. This will fulfill the obligations on the part of India in terms of UNCRD. Further, the new law will not only enhance the Rights and Entitlements of Divyangjan but also provide an effective mechanism for ensuring their empowerment and true inclusion into the Society in a satisfactory manner.

Accessibility India campaign

- Government of India has launched **Accessible India Campaign**, a flagship programme to create barrier free environment for Persons with Disabilities in 2015. The campaign targets creation of Physical and virtual infrastructure truly accessible and inclusive for the persons with disabilities and for making public buildings, transport systems and information communications technology accessible on a wide scale.

In the **2021 census, disability will be defined as per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (or RPwD) Act of 2016**, clarified Shakuntala Doley Gamlin, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons With Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice Empowerment.

Way forward

- Advocacy for mainstreaming the systems and services. It requires commitment across all sectors and built into new and existing legislation, standards, policies, strategies, and plans.
- Invest in specific programs and services for people with disabilities. In addition to mainstream services, some people with disabilities may require access to specific measures, support services, or training.
- Capacity building of health care providers and program managers. Human resource capacity can be improved through effective education, training, and recruitment..
- Generating representative community-based data will help to plan and execute appropriate measures to address the problems of persons living with disability.

Population and related Issues

- Demography is the systematic study of population. Demography studies the trends and processes associated with population including changes in population size; patterns of births, deaths, and migration; and the structure and composition of the population.
- There are different varieties of demography, including formal demography which is a largely quantitative field, and social demography which focuses on the social, economic or political aspects of populations.
- Demographic data are important for the planning and implementation of state policies, especially those for economic development and general public welfare.

Basic theories w.r.t. Population growth

THE MALTHUSIAN THEORY OF POPULATION GROWTH

- Associated with the English political economist Thomas Robert Malthus). He argued that human populations tend to grow at a much faster rate than the rate at which the means of human subsistence (specially food, but also clothing and other agriculture-based products) can grow. Therefore humanity is condemned to live in poverty forever because the growth of agricultural production will always be overtaken by population growth.
- While population rises in geometric progression (i.e., like 2, 4, 8, 16, 32 etc.), agricultural production can only grow in arithmetic progression.

THEORY OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION.

- It suggests that population growth is linked to overall levels of economic development and that every society follows a typical pattern of development- related population growth.
- There are three basic phases of population growth.
- The first stage is that of low population growth in a society that is underdeveloped and technologically backward. Growth rates are low because both the death rate and the birth rate are very high, so that the difference between the two (or the net growth rate) is low.
- Second stage is a transitional stage of movement from a backward to an advanced stage, and this stage is characterised by very high rates of population growth. It is called : **population explosion** which happens because death rates are brought down relatively quickly through advanced methods of disease control, public health, and better nutrition.

- The third (and last) stage is also one of low growth in a developed society where both death rate and birth rate have been reduced considerably and the difference between them is again small.

Indicators of population growth:

1. Fertility + fecundity :

- A. Birth rate : it is the total number of live births in a particular area (an entire country, a state, a district or other territorial unit) during a specified period (usually a year) divided by the total population of that area in thousands. In other words, the birth rate is the number of live births per 1000 population.

According to, Sample Registration System (SRS) bulletin, released by the Registrar General of India, National birth rate in 2018 stood at 20. It was 36.9 in 1971. Bihar (26.2) continues to remain at the top of list in birth rate while Andaman and Nicobar (11.2) is at the bottom.

- B. TFR: The *total fertility rate* refers to the total number of live births that a hypothetical woman would have if she lived through the reproductive age group.

The total fertility rate (TFR) across most Indian states declined in the past half-a-decade, more so among urban women, according to the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 5.

According to NFHS 5, Sikkim recorded the lowest TFR, with one woman bearing 1.1 children on average; Bihar recorded the highest TFR of three children per woman. In 19 of the 22 surveyed states, TFRs were found to be 'below-replacement'

2. Mortality / death:

- A. IMR : *infant mortality* rate is the number of deaths of babies before the age of one year per 1000 live births.
- B. MMR: the *maternal mortality* rate is the number of women who die in childbirth per 1000 live births

According to the data released by the Registrar General of India, national infant mortality rate (IMR) stands at 32. Madhya Pradesh has an IMR of 48 and Nagaland has 4.

The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in India has declined to 113 in 2016-18 from 122 in 2015-17 and 130 in 2014-2016, according to the special bulletin on Maternal Mortality in India 2016-18, released by the Office of the Registrar General's Sample Registration System (SRS).

High rates of infant and maternal mortality are an unambiguous indicator of backwardness and poverty; development is accompanied by sharp falls in these rates as medical facilities and levels of education, awareness and prosperity increase.

Under National Health Mission, the following interventions are being implemented to reduce infant mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio in the Country:

1. Promotion of institutional deliveries through JananiSurakshaYojana.
2. Operationalization of sub-centres, Primary Health Centres, Community Health Centres and District Hospitals for providing 24x7 basic and comprehensive obstetric care services.
3. Name Based Web enabled Tracking of Pregnant Women to ensure antenatal, intranatal and postnatal care.
4. Mother and Child Protection Card in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development to monitor service delivery for mothers and children.
5. Antenatal, intranatal and postnatal care including Iron and Folic Acid supplementation to pregnant & lactating women for prevention and treatment of anaemia.
6. Engagement of more than 8.9 lakhs Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) to generate demand and facilitate accessing of health care services by the community.
7. Village Health and Nutrition Days in rural areas as an outreach activity, for provision of maternal and child health services.
8. Adolescent Reproductive Sexual Health Programme (ARSH) – Especially for adolescents to have better access to family planning, prevention of sexually transmitted Infections, Provision of counselling and peer education.
9. Health and nutrition education to promote dietary diversification, inclusion of iron and folate rich food as well as food items that promote iron absorption.
10. JananiShishuSurakshaKaryakaram (JSSK) entitles all pregnant women delivering in public health institutions to absolutely free and no expense delivery including Caesarean section. The initiative stipulates free drugs, diagnostics, blood and diet, besides free transport from home to institution, between facilities in case of a referral and drop back home. Similar entitlements have been put in place for all sick infants accessing public health institutions for treatment.

11. Universal Immunization Programme (UIP): Vaccination protects children against many life threatening diseases such as Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Polio, Tetanus, Hepatitis B and Measles. Infants are thus immunized against seven vaccine preventable diseases every year. The Government of India supports the vaccine programme by supply of vaccines and syringes, cold chain equipment and provision of operational costs.
12. Strengthening Facility based newborn care: Newborn care corners (NBCC) are being set up at all health facilities where deliveries take place; Special New Born Care Units (SNCUs) and New Born Stabilization Units (NBSUs) are also being set up at appropriate facilities for the care of sick newborn including preterm babies.
13. Home Based Newborn Care (HBNC): Home based newborn care through ASHA has been initiated to improve new born practices at the community level and early detection and referral of sick new born babies
14. Capacity building of health care providers: Various trainings are being conducted under National Health Mission (NHM) to build and upgrade the skills of health care providers in basic and comprehensive obstetric care of mother during pregnancy, delivery and essential newborn care.
15. Management of Malnutrition: Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs) have been established for management of severe acute malnutrition in children.
16. India Newborn Action Plan (INAP) has been launched to reduce neonatal mortality and stillbirths.
17. Newer interventions to reduce newborn mortality- Vitamin K injection at birth, Antenatal corticosteroids for preterm labour, kangaroo mother care and injection gentamicin for possible serious bacillary infection.
18. Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight was observed in August 2014 focusing on ORS and Zinc distribution for management of diarrhoea and feeding practices.
19. Integrated Action Plan for Pneumonia and Diarrhoea (IAPPD) launched in four states with highest infant mortality (UP, MP, Bihar and Rajasthan).

- C. Death rate: it is expressed as the number of deaths in a given area during a given time per 1000 population.

According to, Sample Registration System (SRS) bulletin, released by the Registrar General of India, Death rate stood at 6.2 in 2018 from 14.9 in 1971.

Population Growth in India:

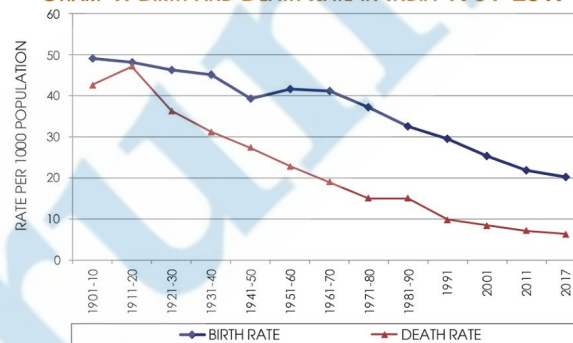
TABLE 1: THE POPULATION OF INDIA AND ITS GROWTH DURING THE 20TH CENTURY

Year	Total Population (in millions)	Average Annual Growth Rate (%)	Decadal Growth Rate (%)
1901	238	-	-
1911	252	0.56	5.8
1921	251	-0.03	-0.3
1931	279	1.04	11.0
1941	319	1.33	14.2
1951	361	1.25	13.3
1961	439	1.96	21.6
1971	548	2.22	24.8
1981	683	2.20	24.7
1991	846	2.14	23.9
2001	1028	1.95	21.5
2011	1210	1.63	17.7

Source: website: <http://ajush.gov.in>

Since 1981
↓

CHART 1: BIRTH AND DEATH RATE IN INDIA 1901-2017



Source: National Commission on Population, Government of India. website: <http://populationcommission.nic.in/facts1.htm#> National Health Profile 2018, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India; Economic Survey 2018-19, Government of India.

- India is the second most populous country in the world after China, with a total population of 121 crores (or 1.21 billion) according to the Census of India 2011. As can be seen from Table 1, the growth rate of India's population has not always been very high.
- Between 1901–1951 the average annual growth rate did not exceed 1.33%, a modest rate of growth. In fact between 1911 and 1921 there was a negative rate of growth of – 0.03%. This was because of the influenza epidemic during 1918–19 which killed about 12.5 million persons or 5% of the total population of the country.

- The growth rate of population substantially increased after independence from British rule going up to 2.2% during 1961-1981. Since then although the annual growth rate has decreased it remains one of the highest in the developing world.

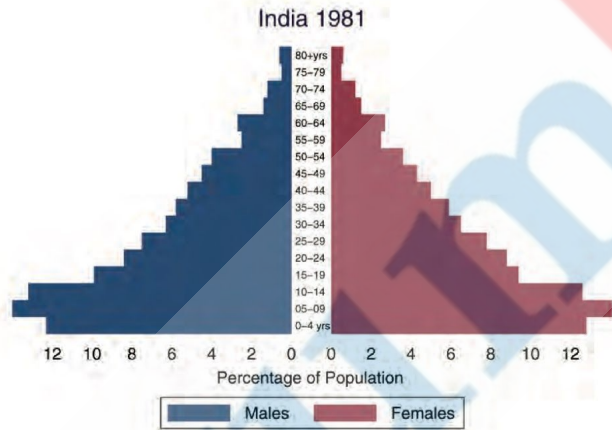
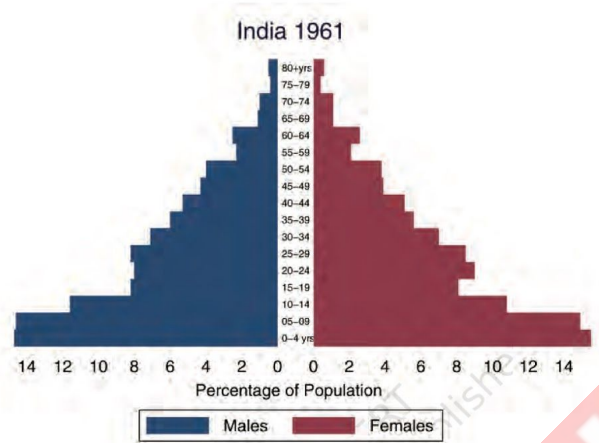
Sex ratio

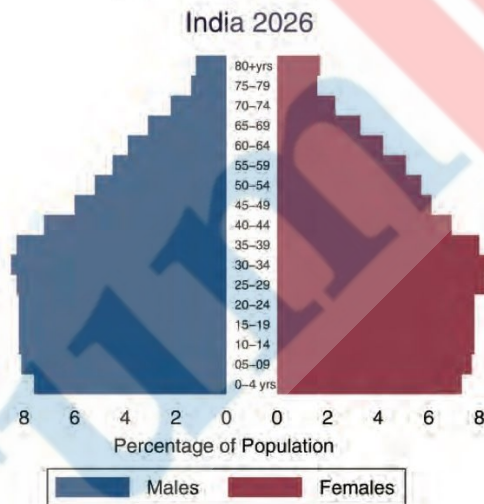
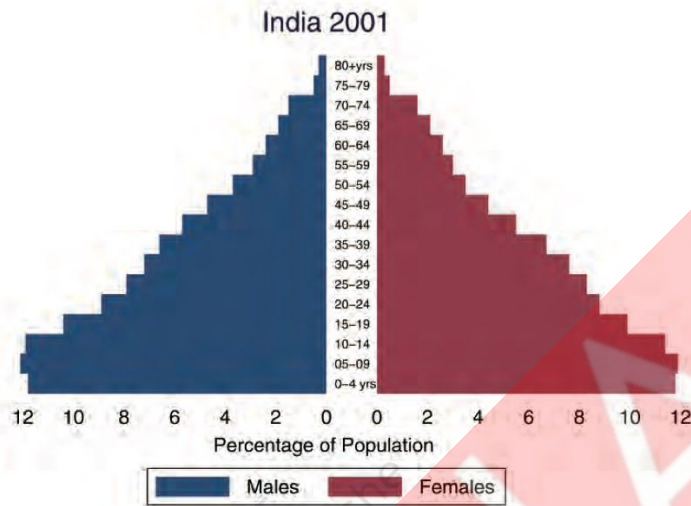
- The sex ratio is an important indicator of gender balance in the population.
- Naturally, the sex ratio has been slightly in favour of females, that is, the number of females per 1000 males has generally been somewhat higher than 1000. However, India has had a declining sex-ratio for more than a century.
- From 972 females per 1000 males at the turn of the twentieth century, the sex ratio has declined to 933 at the turn of the twenty-first century. The trends of the last four decades have been particularly worrying – from 941 in 1961 the sex ratio had fallen to an all-time low of 927 in 1991 before posting a modest increase in 2001. According to Census of India 2011 sex ratio has increased and now it is 943 females per 1000 males.
- But what has really alarmed demographers, policy makers, social activists and concerned citizens is the drastic fall in the child sex ratio.
- The sex ratio for the 0 - 6 years age group (known as the juvenile or child sex ratio) has generally been substantially higher than the overall sex ratio for all age groups, but it has been falling very sharply.
- In fact the decade 1991-2001 represents an anomaly in that the overall sex ratio has posted its highest ever increase of 6 points from the all time low of 927 to 933, but the child sex ratio has dropped from 945 to 927, a plunge of 18 points taking it below the overall sex ratio for the first time. In 2011 Census, the child sex ratio again decreased by 13 points and now it is 919.

Age Structure

- India has a very young population that is, the majority of Indians tend to be young, and the average age is also less than that for most other countries.
- The Age Group 'pyramid' provides a much more detailed version of the kind of age.
- Here, data are shown separately for males (on the left side) and females (on the right side) with the relevant five-year age group in the middle. Looking at the horizontal bars (including both males and females in a particular age group) gives you a visual sense of the age structure of the population. The age groups begin from the 0-4 years group at the bottom of the pyramid and go on to the 80 years and above age group at the top.

CHART 3: AGE GROUP PYRAMIDS, 1961, 1981, 2001 AND 2026





Demographic Dividend:

- The demographic advantage or ‘dividend’ to be derived from the age structure of the population is due to the fact that India is (and will remain for some time) one of the youngest countries in the world.
- A third of India’s population was below 15 years of age in 2000. In 2020, the average Indian will be only 29 years old, compared with an average age of 37 in China and the United States, 45 in Western Europe, and 48 in Japan. This implies a large and growing labour force, which can deliver unexpected benefits in terms of growth and prosperity.
- The ‘demographic dividend’ results from an increase in the proportion of workers relative to non-workers in the population. In terms of age, the working population is roughly that

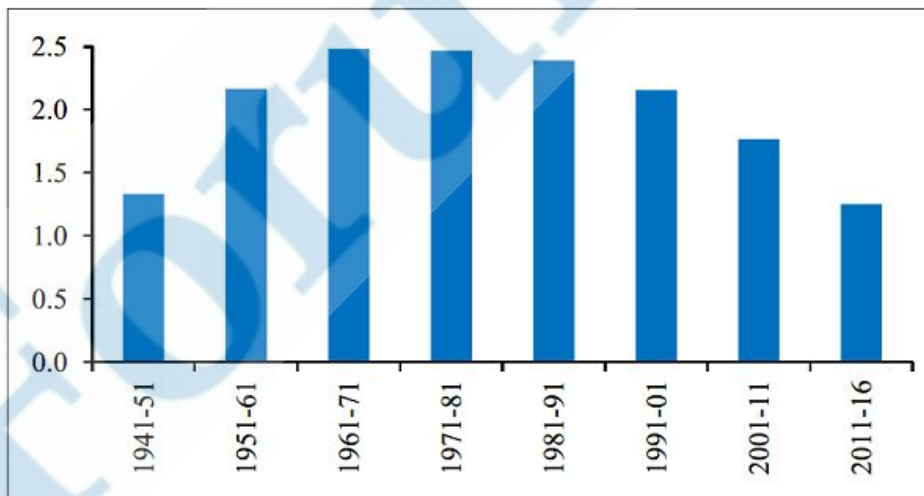
between 15 and 64 years of age. This working age group must support itself as well as those outside this age group (i.e., children and elderly people) who are unable to work and are therefore dependents. Changes in the age structure due to the demographic transition lower the 'dependency ratio', or the ratio of non-working age to working-age population, thus creating the potential for generating growth.

- But this potential can be converted into actual growth only if the rise in the working age group is accompanied by increasing levels of education and employment. If the new entrants to the labour force are not educated then their productivity remains low. If they remain unemployed, then they are unable to earn at all and become dependents rather than earners. Thus, changing age structure by itself cannot guarantee any benefits unless it is properly utilised through planned development.

Is India experiencing a population explosion?

- The Economic Survey of India 2018-19 clearly states that the population growth rate has been slowing down in recent decades. It mentions that the population growth rate of 2.5 per cent annually during 1971-81 has reduced to 1.6 per cent during 2011-16. Many significant states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana, that, at one point, were infamous for their large populations are now experiencing a deceleration in population growth.

Figure 1: Annual Population Growth Rate in India (per cent)



- Source: Census 2011, International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) estimates.

- According to the census, the Total Fertility Rate or TFR, which is the number of children born to a woman during her lifetime, has reduced from 5.2 to 4.1 between 1971-1981 and from 3.6 to 2.4 during 1991-2016. A fertility rate of 2.1 is the ballpark figure indicating population stabilisation. Therefore, we can conclusively say that India's population is not exploding. The current rate of population growth too was achieved via coercive population control schemes and policies under which women from Dalit, Adivasi and Muslim communities have disproportionately suffered.

Does High population leads to poverty and hinders development ?

- The theory that 'overpopulation' is at the root of all sorts of challenges that countries from the Global South face, including issues such as poverty, climate change and terrorism, has assumed the status of a truism at the global and national level. But this discourse obscures the voices that have consistently been raised against it by researchers and activists.
- Countries like South Korea and Taiwan experienced rapid population growth throughout the second half of the 20th century without it negatively impacting their per capita income. Instead, between 1960-80 the average per capita income in South Korea and Taiwan was 6.2 per cent and 7 per cent respectively.
- Other studies have indicated that more than population growth, the age composition of a population plays an influential role in partly determining economic development. The ICPD (1994) too had rejected the idea that population growth and economic development are intrinsically related.
- Scholars and activists alike have argued that the overpopulation narrative locates the cause of poverty in the individual without critiquing the structures within which they function. The implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), for instance, has pushed several developing countries into debt, reduced employment opportunities and lowered wages. The cumulative impact of these economic conditions has resulted in both extreme poverty and the collapse of democratic institutions. However, the SAPs are seldom critiqued by international and national institutions for giving rise to devastating levels of poverty and malnourishment.

Poverty

Quotes

- “As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality exist in the world, none of us can truly exist.” – Nelson Mandela
- “Wars of nations are fought to change maps. But wars of poverty are fought to map change.” – Muhammad Ali
- “Poverty is like punishment for a crime you didn’t commit.” – Eli Khamarov
- “The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.” — Franklin D. Roosevelt
-

POVERTY :

1. **United Nations:** poverty is the inability of having choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society.
2. **World Bank:** Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one’s life.
3. Mohammad Yunus: Concept of Bonsai Poverty.

Poverty Line, Poverty Line Basket and Poverty Ratio

- The conventional approach to measuring poverty is to specify a minimum expenditure (or income) required to purchase a basket of goods and services necessary to satisfy basic human needs. This minimum expenditure is called the poverty line.
- The basket of goods and services necessary to satisfy basic human needs is the poverty line basket or PLB.
- The proportion of the population below the poverty line is called the poverty ratio or headcount ratio (HCR).

Poverty In world:

- According to the most recent estimates, in 2015, 10 percent of the world's population or 734 million people lived on less than \$1.90 a day.
- Globally, the number of people living in extreme poverty declined from 36 per cent in 1990 to 10 per cent in 2015. But the pace of change is decelerating and the COVID-19 crisis risks reversing decades of progress in the fight against poverty. New research published by the UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research warns that the economic fallout from the global pandemic could increase global poverty by as much as half a billion people,
- Developing countries are most at risk during and in the aftermath of the pandemic, not only as a health crisis but as a devastating social and economic crisis over the months and years to come. According to UNDP income losses are expected to exceed \$220 billion in developing countries, and an estimated 55 per cent of the global population have no access to social protection. These losses will reverberate across societies; impacting education, human rights and, in the most severe cases, basic food security and nutrition.
- Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are expected to see the largest increases in extreme poverty, with an additional 32 million and 26 million people, respectively, living below the international poverty line as a result of the pandemic.

SDG on poverty:

- By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day .
- 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
- 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
- 1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.
- 1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.

- 1.A Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions.
- 1.B Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions

The international poverty line

- The international poverty line was originally set to roughly \$1 a day. When purchasing power parity (PPP) and all goods consumed are considered in the calculation of the line, it allows organizations to determine which populations are considered to be in absolute poverty.
- The World Bank sets the international poverty line at periodic intervals as the cost of living for basic food, clothing, and shelter around the world changes. In the 2008 update, the poverty line was set at \$1.25 per day. In 2015, the threshold was updated to \$1.90 per day, which is where it currently stands.

Poverty Estimation in India

- Poverty estimation in India is carried out by NITI Aayog's task force through the calculation of poverty line based on the data captured by the National Sample Survey Office under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI).
- Now, NSSO and CSO have been merged into NSO.
- Poverty line estimation in India is based on the consumption expenditure and not on the income levels. Poverty is measured based on consumer expenditure surveys of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO).
- A poor household is defined as one with an expenditure level below a specific poverty line.

Committee

1. Alagh Committee (1979),
2. Lakdawala Committee (1993),
3. Tendulkar Committee (2009),
4. Rangarajan committee (2012)

According to the report of the Rangarajan committee, the new poverty line should be Rs 32 in rural areas and Rs 47 in urban areas. The earlier poverty line figure (Tendulkar) was Rs 27 for rural India and Rs 33 for Urban India.

The Rangarajan report has added 93.7 million more to the list of the poor assessed last year as per the Suresh Tendulkar committee formula.

Poverty alleviation programs in India

- Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP): It was introduced in 1978-79 and universalized from 2nd October, 1980, aimed at providing assistance to the rural poor in the form of subsidy and bank credit for productive employment opportunities through successive plan periods.
- Jawahar Rozgar Yojana/Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana: The JRY was meant to generate meaningful employment opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed in rural areas through the creation of economic infrastructure and community and social assets.
- Rural Housing – Indira Awaas Yojana: The Indira Awaas Yojana (LAY) programme aims at providing free housing to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families in rural areas and main targets would be the households of SC/STs.
- Food for Work Programme: It aims at enhancing food security through wage employment. Food grains are supplied to states free of cost, however, the supply of food grains from the Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns has been slow.
- National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS): This pension is given by the central government. The job of implementation of this scheme in states and union territories is given to panchayats and municipalities. The state's contribution may vary depending on the state. The amount of old age pension is ₹200 per month for applicants aged 60–79. For applicants aged above 80 years, the amount has been revised to ₹500 a month according to the 2011–2012 Budget. It is a successful venture.
- Annapurna: This scheme was started by the government in 1999–2000 to provide food to senior citizens who cannot take care of themselves and are not under the National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), and who have no one to take care of them in their village. This scheme would provide 10 kg of free food grains a month for the eligible senior citizens. They mostly target groups of 'poorest of the poor' and 'indigent senior citizens'.
- Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY): The main objective of the scheme continues to be the generation of wage employment, creation of durable economic infrastructure in rural areas and provision of food and nutrition security for the poor.
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005: The Act provides 100 days assured employment every year to every rural household. One-third of the proposed jobs would be reserved for women. The central government will also establish National Employment Guarantee Funds. Similarly, state governments will establish State Employment Guarantee Funds for implementation of

the scheme. Under the programme, if an applicant is not provided employment within 15 days s/he will be entitled to a daily unemployment allowance.

- National Rural Livelihood Mission: Ajeevika (2011): It evolves out the need to diversify the needs of the rural poor and provide them jobs with regular income on a monthly basis. Self Help groups are formed at the village level to help the needy.
- National Urban Livelihood Mission: The NULM focuses on organizing urban poor in Self Help Groups, creating opportunities for skill development leading to market-based employment and helping them to set up self-employment ventures by ensuring easy access to credit.
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana: It will focus on fresh entrants to the labour market, especially labour market and class X and XII dropouts.
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana: It aimed at direct benefit transfer of subsidy, pension, insurance etc. and attained the target of opening 1.5 crore bank accounts. The scheme particularly targets the unbanked poor.

HUNGER and related issues

Hunger

- According to FAO, Hunger is a condition of chronic undernourishment when "caloric intake is below the minimum dietary energy requirement (MDER). The MDER is the amount of energy needed to perform light activity and to maintain a minimum acceptable weight for attained height."
- Amartya Sen defines Hunger as absence of 3A(s) of food i.e.- Availability, Affordability and accessibility.
- However, he focussed most on accessibility of food. In fact, Sen won the Nobel Prize in 1998 for his groundbreaking theory that **hunger and starvation result from some people not having access to enough food - what he called entitlement - not because there is not enough food available in the country or region.**

Prevalence of Hunger in world

- Globally, the proportion of undernourished people in developing regions has fallen by almost half since 1990, from 23.3% in 1990-1992.
- After decades of steady decline, the number of people who suffer from hunger as measured by the prevalence of undernourishment began to slowly increase again in 2015.
- According to UN current estimates, nearly 690 million people are hungry, or 8.9 percent of the world population, up by 10 million people in one year and by nearly 60 million in five years.
- The world is not on track to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030. If recent trends continue, the number of people affected by hunger would surpass 840 million by 2030.
- As per FAO estimates, 2017 saw the third consecutive rise in world hunger, with the absolute number of undernourished people i.e. those facing chronic food deprivation increasing to 821 million.
- South Asia still faces one of the greatest hunger burdens, with over 15% of the population considered undernourished.
- According to the World Food Programme, 135 million suffer from acute hunger largely due to man-made conflicts, climate change and economic downturns. The COVID-19 pandemic could now double that number, putting an additional 130 million people at risk of suffering acute hunger by the end of 2020.

Prevalence of hunger in India

According to Global Hunger Index the following findings have been listed

- India ranked 94 out of 107 countries in GHI 2020.
- India ranked 102 out of 117 countries in 2019 and 100 out of 119 countries in 2018.
- India is ranked behind Bangladesh (75), Myanmar (78) and Pakistan (88).
- India is placed in the serious category.
- Nepal and Sri Lanka are in moderate category ranking 73 and 64 respectively.

Where India stands

The Global Hunger Index score is computed using four indicators – undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality. A country's GHI score is classified by severity – low (), moderate () and serious ()



RANK	COUNTRY	2020 SCORE
1-17*	China	<5
64	Sri Lanka	16.3
73	Nepal	19.5
75	Bangladesh	20.4
78	Myanmar	20.9
88	Pakistan	24.6
94	India	27.2
99	Afghanistan	30.3

***17 countries have scores of less than 5 and are collectively ranked 1-17**

SOFI report on Hunger:

According to State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2020 report –

- SOFI report is a joint report issued annually by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization.
- The world is not on track to meet the goal of zero hunger by 2030.
- Around 8-13 crore people globally are likely to go hungry this year due to the economic recession triggered by COVID-19.
- Almost 690 million people around the world went hungry in 2019. (up by 1 crore in 2018)
- Hunger continues to be on the rise since 2014 and the global prevalence of undernourishment, or overall percentage of hungry people, is 8.9%.
- Asia remains home to the greatest number of undernourished (38 crore). Africa is second (25 crore), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (4.8 crore).
- The report underlines that hunger continues to be on the rise since 2014 and the global prevalence of undernourishment or overall percentage of hungry people is 8.9%.
- According to current estimates, in 2019, 21.3% (14.4.crore) of children under 5 years were stunted and 5.6% (3.8 million) overweight.
- The report highlights that a healthy diet costs more than ₹143 (or \$1.90/ day), which is the international poverty threshold.
- The number of people globally who can't afford a healthy diet is at 300 crore people, or more than the combined population of the two most populous countries in the world, i.e. China and India.

According to current estimates, in 2019:

- 21.3% (14.4.crore) of children under 5 years were stunted,
- 6.9% (4.7 crore) wasted and
- 5.6% (3.8 million) overweight
- A healthy diet costs more than ₹143 (or \$1.90/ day) which is the international poverty threshold.

Causes:

- Lack of food availability
 - Food wastage- every year 45 million tonnes of grains is wasted in FCI godowns.
 - Inefficient transportation and distribution of food.
 - Pilferage and diversion.
 - Lack of qualitative + diversified food basket.
- Affordability: High food inflation + poverty + ill-planned policies.
- Accessibility: Inclusion + exclusion errors.
- Faulty Policies
 - Poor funding of food programmes- Ex- ASHA workers are not paid salary in time, many village development centres are non functional.
 - Lack of integration between schemes like ICDS and Mid day meal schemes.
 - Multiplicity of schemes.

SDG on Hunger:

- By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.
- By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.
- By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.
- By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.
- By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.
 - Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries.
 - Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural

export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round.

- Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility.

Govt. initiative

- Eat Right India movement by FSSAI- The movement aims to cut down salt/sugar and oil consumption by 30% in three years. It also aims to engage and enable citizens to improve their health and well-being by making the right food choices.
- POSHAN Abhiyan by the Ministry of Women and Child Development launched in 2017-18, aims to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anemia and low birth weight babies through synergy and convergence among different programmes, better monitoring and improved community mobilisation.
- Integrated Child Development Service- The scheme provides specific interventions targeted towards the vulnerable groups including children below 6 years and women. It also provides a package of six services namely supplementary nutrition, pre-school non-formal education, nutrition & health education, immunization, health check-up and referral services.
- National food Security Act 2013- It aims to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity.
- Mid Day Meal Scheme aims to improve nutritional levels among school children which also has a direct and positive impact on enrolment, retention and attendance in schools.

Way Forward:

- Biofortification
 - Biofortification is the process by which the nutritional quality of food crops is improved through agronomic practices, conventional plant breeding, or modern biotechnology.
 - Bio-fortified staples need to be closely linked to India's food-based welfare programmes including the Public distribution system (PDS), the Mid-day meal and anganwadis and should become an integral part of the National Nutrition Mission (POSHAN Abhiyan). This would also help fight the adverse impact of Covid-19 on the nutrition of the country's vulnerable population.
 - 15 States have been identified for implementing Centrally Sponsored Pilot Scheme on Fortification of Rice & its distribution through Public Distribution System.
 - Fortified rice contains elevated levels of Vitamin B-12, iron and folic acid. It will be distributed via Mid day meal scheme and ICDS.
 - Special focus will be on 112 Aspirational districts identified by NITI Aayog (Aspirational Districts are those districts in India, that are affected by poor socio-economic indicators. These are aspirational in the context, that improvement in

these districts can lead to the overall improvement in human development in India).

- Vitamins like Vitamin B-12 and minerals like iron and folic acid should be added to staple food like rice, wheat and barley which is distributed via the Public Distribution System.
- Higher level of convergence among govt schemes should be achieved like mid day meal scheme, ICDS and Mid Day meal scheme for better targeting.
- Improving storage facilities for storing grains leads to wastage and grain rot in the open. Sometimes these grains are also given to the beneficiaries which leads to diseases and poor health.
- Expand the safety net through ICDS to cover all vulnerable groups. Currently ICDS covers only children below the age of 6 years and pregnant women. But to fight hunger ICDS should be expanded to poor, elderly, marginalised and children till 14 years of age.
- Fortify essential foods with appropriate nutrients. Ex- Salt with iodine.
- Increase efficiency of milk production and include them in the mid day meal scheme - India produces 166MT of milk annually but it has to produce more quantities of milk as a lot of milk gets wasted in storage, transportation and poor hygiene.
- Instead of fortified rice directly iron and folic acid tablets can be given to the beneficiaries for better and quicker results as fortified rice takes at least 24 months to show results.

Migration

- Migration is the movement of people away from their usual place of residence, across either internal (within country) or international (across countries) borders.
- Census defines migration when Place of birth and place of residence are not same.
- The International Organization for Migration (The United Nations Migration Agency) defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of :
 - Person's legal status
 - Whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary
 - What the causes for the movement are
 - What the length of the stay is

Data:

- As per the Census 2011, India had 45.6 crore migrants in 2011 (38% of the population) compared to 31.5 crore migrants in 2001 (31% of the population).
- Between 2001 and 2011, while the population grew by 18%, the number of migrants increased by 45%.
- In 2011, 99% of total migration was internal and immigrants (international migrants) comprised 1%.
- According to the International Migrant Stock 2019 report (released by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs), India with 17.5 million international migrants has emerged as the top source of international migrants, constituting 6.4% of world's total migrant population.

Types of migration

1. Internal migrant flows can be classified on the basis of origin and destination.

- One kind of classification is: i) rural-rural, ii) rural-urban, iii) urban-rural and iv) urban-urban.
- As per the 2011 census, there were 21 crore rural-rural migrants which formed 54% of classifiable internal migration.
- Rural-urban and urban-urban movement accounted for around 8 crore migrants each.
- There were around 3 crore urban-rural migrants (7% of classifiable internal migration).

2. Another way to classify migration is: (i) intra-state, and (ii) inter-state.

- In 2011, intra-state movement accounted for almost 88% of all internal migration (39.6 crore persons).
- According to the 2011 Census, there were 5.4 crore inter-state migrants.
- As of 2011, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were the largest source of inter-state migrants while Maharashtra and Delhi were the largest receiver states.

3. Duration:

- Permanent:
- Circular/ seasonal

Causes of Migration

Push-factors Countries of origin	Migrants	Pull-factors Countries of destination
⇒ Population growth, young age structure	Demographic factors and social infrastructure	⇒ Stable population, population decline, demographic ageing
⇒ Inadequate educational institutions, medicare and social security		⇒ Welfare state benefits, educational institutions, medicare, social security
⇒ Unemployment, low wages	Economic factors	⇒ Labour demand, high wages
⇒ Poverty, low consumption and living standard		⇒ Welfare, high consumption and living standard
⇒ Dictatorships, shadow democracy, bad governance, political upheaval	Political factors	⇒ Democracy, rule of law, pluralism, political stability
⇒ Conflict, (civil) war, terrorism, human rights violation, oppression of minorities		⇒ Peace, security, protection of human and civil rights, protection of minorities
⇒ Ecologic disaster, desertification, lack of natural resources, water shortage, soil erosion, lack of environmental policy	Ecological factors	⇒ Better environment, environmental policy, protection of natural resources and environmental protection
⇒ Decisions of the family or the clan	Migrant flows and migrant stocks	⇒ Diaspora, ethnic community
⇒ Information flows, media,		⇒ Information flows, media, transferred picture of

Impacts / consequence:

Positive:

- Labour Demand and Supply: Migration fills gaps in demand for and supply of labor, efficiently allocates skilled labor, unskilled labor, and cheap labor.
- Economic Remittances: Economic wellbeing of migrants provides insurance against risks to households in the areas of origin, increases consumer expenditure and investment in health, education and assets formation.
- Skill Development: Migration enhances the knowledge and skills of migrants through exposure and interaction with the outside world.
- Quality of Life: Migration enhances chances of employment and economic prosperity which in turn improves quality of life. The migrants also send extra income and remittance back home, thereby positively impacting their native place.
- Social Remittances: Migration helps to improve the social life of migrants, as they learn about new cultures, customs, and languages which helps to improve brotherhood among people and ensures greater equality and tolerance.
- Food and Nutrition Security: According to the 2018 State of Food and Agriculture report by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), outmigration often leads to improved food and nutrition security for migrants

- Demographic Advantage: As a result of outmigration, the population density of the place of origin is reduced and the birth rate decreases.
- Climate Change Adaptive Mechanism: Migration has also emerged as a possible adaptive mechanism in the context of climate change and the occurrence of extreme weather events like floods, droughts, and cyclones.

Negative:

- Demographic Profile: Emigration in large numbers can alter demographic profiles of communities, as most of the young men move out, leaving only the women and elderly to work on the land.
- Political Exclusion: Migrant workers are deprived of many opportunities to exercise their political rights like the right to vote.
- Population Explosion and the Influx of workers in the place of destination increases competition for the job, houses, school facilities etc and a large population puts too much pressure on natural resources, amenities, and services.
- Illiterate and Underskilled Migrants are not only unfit for most jobs, because of a lack of basic knowledge and life skills but are also prone to the victimization of exploitation, trafficking, psychological abuse, and gender-based violence in the case of female migrants.
- Increased Slum: Mass Migration results into an increase in slum areas, compromising quality of infrastructure and life at the destination, which further translates into many other problems such as unhygienic conditions, crime, pollution, etc.
- Inclusion and Integration of Migrants: Internal migration is not viewed positively in India and policies are often aimed at reducing internal migration, as a result, there is a lack of integration of migration with the process of development.
- Psychological and Emotional Stress: Any person migrating to a new country faces multiple challenges, from cultural adaptation and language barriers to homesickness and loneliness.
- Employment challenges: Foreign labor migrants often face unacceptable treatment from their employers. For instance, some labor migrants are paid below their contract wage and may be forced to work long hours and denied regular time off.
- For internal migrants also there is the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), enacted to prevent migrant workers from being exploited, but it is rarely invoked and the penalty is minimal.
- Exclusion from social benefits: The need to provide proof of address, ration cards, Voter IDs and Aadhaar cards, which is difficult due to the fluidity of their lives, deprive them from accessing welfare schemes and policies.

Migrants and the SDG

- The 2030 Agenda (with core principle to "leave no one behind," including migrants) for Sustainable Development recognizes for the first time the contribution of migration to sustainable development.
- 11 out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contain targets and indicators that are relevant to migration or mobility.

- The SDGs' central reference to migration is made in target 10.7, to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

International Migration and Global action

- In 2016 the United Nations General Assembly convened a high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and prepared the report "Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants".
- United Nations member states adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which commits to protect the safety, dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status.
- As a result of the New York Declaration, UN Member States agreed to cooperate in the elaboration of a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted at an intergovernmental conference on international migration in December 2018 in Morocco.
- Every year, 8th December is celebrated as International Migrants Day.

Way forward

- The Rurban Mission will create many clusters in rural-urban intersection points which will create jobs and spur economic activity.
- Smart village development on the lines of smart city.
- One Nation One Ration Card scheme will help in securing the nutrition and food safety of migrants as they would be entitled for their share of food in the state they would be residing.
- The Human Development Report by United Nation Development Programme (2009) highlights that migration is integral to the process of human development and it plays a very important role in achieving sustainable development goals, thereby preventing migration could even be counterproductive. Hence, focus needs to be made on facilitating migration rather than curbing it.
- India needs to formulate migration centric policies, strategies, and institutional mechanisms in order to ensure inclusive growth and development and reduce distress induced migration, thereby increasing India's prospects for poverty reduction and achieving Sustainable Development Goals.
- The government at Centre needs to provide amenities and social securities for the migrant population. For instance, schemes like Kerala government's Aawaz health insurance scheme, Apna Ghar project -accommodation for migrant workers, Portable Rights- ensures the basic rights to workers in their respective home state, even as they labour in other states.