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## APPROACH - ANSWER: GENERAL STUDIES MAINS MOCK TEST - 1397 (2020)

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1. *What do you understand by good governance? Explain with special focus on characteristics of good governance identified by UNDP.*

**Approach:**

- Introduce by explaining the term governance followed by good governance.
- Enumerate the characteristics of good governance as identified by UNDP.
- Conclude by briefly discussing the significance of good governance.

**Answer:**

Simply put "governance" means the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented. Good governance is the process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law.

Good Governance is a **qualitative concept** which comprises of the existence of effective mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences, e.g. incorporation of direct benefit transfer and social audit in schemes like MGNREGA has improved its effectiveness and benefits for MGNREGA workers. Good Governance is usually used in the context of administration and state, where they are expected to function on the basis of some set characteristics.

**Characteristics of Good Governance identified by UNDP**

- **Participation:** All citizens should have a voice in decision-making in some form based on freedom of speech and association as well as on the capacity to participate constructively.
- **Consensus orientation:** There should be an effort to reach a broad consensus on differing interests of various stakeholders for the best interest of the general public.
- **Responsiveness:** It requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe i.e. the grievance redressal mechanism and response of the institutions should be prompt.
- **Effectiveness and efficiency:** The processes and institutions optimize the resources while trying to achieve the best results.
- **Accountability:** Decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil-society organizations should be accountable to the public as well as to institutional stakeholders.
- **Transparency:** There must be focus on openness and dissemination of information by different institutions.
- **Equity:** The institutions must try to achieve that every citizen has fair opportunities to improve or maintain its wellbeing.
- **Rule of Law:** There must be fair legal architecture in place, which must be strictly enforced without any bias or favour towards any citizen.
- **Strategic vision:** The leaders and people at large must have a long-term perspective on development course being taken by the state.

Good governance is a positive and inclusive concept since it places people at the core of the developmental process, thereby, intensifying the democratic processes and upholding the faith of citizens in the state.

2. **Mention the issues with the public healthcare system in India. How can these issues be addressed?**

**Approach:**

- Introduce by discussing public healthcare system & its components in India.
- Enumerate the issues associated with the public healthcare system in India.
- Highlight the measures that can be taken to address these issues.
- Conclude on the basis of aforementioned points.

**Answer:**

The public healthcare system in India comprises the public infrastructure and various schemes provided by the government in the delivery of health services. It includes the primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare institutions, professional research and training institutions, personnel implementing various health programs and health management information systems.

**Issues with public healthcare system**

- **Insufficient expenditure:** India spends approximately 1.4 per cent of its GDP on healthcare, which is much lower in comparison to BRICS countries - Brazil (8.3 percent), China (6.4 percent), Russian Federation (7.1 percent) and South Africa (8.8 percent).
- **Inadequate Physical Infrastructure:** As per India Spend, 63% of Primary Health Centres (PHCs) do not have an operation theatre and 29% do not have a labour room.
- **Inadequate Human Resources:** According to National Health Profile 2019, there is only one allopathic government doctor for every 10,926 people in India which is less than the WHO's recommended doctor-population ratio of 1:1000.
- **Large-scale regional disparities:** The public healthcare facilities are not uniform across developed and backward areas, rural-urban areas and also across various states. E.g. Population per government hospital bed in Kerala stands at 1300 where as in Bihar it is around 28000.
- **Lack of Synergy:** Health being a state subject, various initiatives by the Union government and State governments work in silos which further restricts optimisation of resources.

According to recent NSSO data private hospitals across the country accounted for 55 per cent of the in-patient hospitalisation cases for availing treatment while the share for public hospitals was 42 per cent. Only 14% of the rural population and 19% of the urban population reported that they had health expenditure coverage. This consequently leads to higher out of pocket expenditure on health.

**Measures to address issues facing public healthcare system**

- **Strengthening Physical Infrastructure**
  - **Increasing availability of healthcare facilities:** Enough primary health centres have to be constructed in rural areas e.g. creation of Health and Wellness Center under Ayushman Bharat.
  - **Strengthening District Hospitals:** States must be incentivized to increase the ratio of hospital beds to population and also to propose general ICUs, and High-dependency units for every 10-lac population.
  - **Use of PPP:** A comprehensive model of PPP for providing healthcare services in public hospitals and opening of medical institutions must be implemented as proposed by NITI Aayog.
- **Increase Government spending on Public Health:** Targeted public expenditure of 2.5% of GDP by 2025 under National Health Program must be achieved.
- **Quality workforce:** Governments should focus on enhancing the quality of health workers through various ways such as institution of public health and management cadre. Also more medical colleges should be established and number of seats in medical colleges should be increased.
- **Health Surveillance System:** The government should work to establish registries for diseases of public health importance by 2020.
- **Rural Service:** To address the urban-rural gap, the government should incentivize and provide for mandatory rural service for medical students at the different health centres.

- **Use of Technology:** It can be utilized to provide basic healthcare services to rural areas like tele-medicine.

The public health system needs to be taken forward in line with the National Health Policy 2017 and various NITI aayog proposals so as to achieve SDG 3 i.e. Good Health and Well-Being for all.

**3. *Explaining the concept of regionalism, elaborate on the different forms that regionalism has taken in India.***

**Approach:**

- Give a brief explanation on the concept of regionalism.
- Highlight the factors responsible for it.
- Discuss the various forms in which regionalism manifests itself in India.
- Conclude in a balanced manner.

**Answer:**

Regionalism can be defined as a phenomenon in which people's political loyalties become focused upon a region. In other words, it implies people's love of a particular region in preference to the country and in certain cases in preference to the state of which the region is a part.

Regionalism in India is rooted in India's diversity of languages, cultures, tribes, economic interests etc. It is also encouraged by the geographical concentration of these identity makers in particular regions, and fuelled by a sense of regional deprivation. Indian federalism has been a means of accommodating these regional sentiments such as by formation of new states such as Telangana.

**Various forms of regionalism existing in India:**

- **Secessionist Movements:** People in certain states or regions wanted to secede from the Indian Union. For e.g. Mizo National Front, Naga Hill District of Assam.
- **Supra State Regionalism:** It involves more than one state and is an expression of group identity of some states which take a common stand on the issue of mutual interest vis-à-vis another group of states. e.g. North-South divide on the issue of language.
- **Interstate regionalism:** It is related with state boundaries and involves overlapping one or more state identities which threaten their interests. For e.g. Cauvery river water dispute between Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Puducherry and Kerala.
- **Intrastate regional politics or sub-regionalism:** It embodies the desire of a part of a state for the identity, self-development or demand for autonomy. It may also reflect a notion of deprivation or exploitation of a part of the state at the expense of the others. For e.g. Vidarbha of Maharashtra, Bodoland of Assam etc.
- **Concept of Son of Soil:** It ties people to their place of birth and confers some benefits, rights, roles and responsibility on them, which may not apply to others. It is accentuated by factors such as competition for resources, jobs, economics disparities etc. For e.g. issue related to outsiders in Maharashtra.

However, regionalism is not always opposed to national integration. It may also lead to higher inter-group solidarity and induce competition for betterment when certain genuine demands, especially developmental are conceded.

**4. *Highlight the major problems related to urbanization in India. What steps have been taken by the government in recent times to address these?***

**Approach:**

- Define urbanization and briefly highlight the status of urbanization in India.
- Enumerate the major problems related to urbanization in India.
- List the steps taken by the government in recent times to address these problems.
- Conclude on the basis of the above points.

**Answer:**

Urbanization is the process of increase in the proportion of people living in urban areas either due to natural increase in its population or migration from rural areas. According to the UN State of the

World Population Report 2007, urban population in India is expected to reach 40.76% by 2030. Urban areas are considered as “engines of economic growth”.

Lack of urban planning, limited capacity of urban local bodies (ULBs) and failure of the government to effectively manage the uneven urban growth and build housing, water and sanitation infrastructure leads to many problems, which are manifested as follows:

- **Proliferation of slums:** Increasing urbanization has not been matched with commensurate increase in housing facilities, which has led to inflated rents. This has resulted in overcrowding and spread of slums, which comprises 17% of urban households, as per 2011 census.
- **Inadequate water supply and sanitation:** It is estimated that by 2050, Indian cities will face acute water problems. Currently, 163 million people do not have access to safe drinking water and 210 million people lack access to improved basic sanitation in India.
- **Improper solid waste management:** Indian cities generate 62 million tonnes (MT) of municipal solid waste per annum but only 43 MT of waste is collected and 11.9 MT is treated out of it. It is leading to expanding landfill sites.
- **Inadequate transport infrastructure:** Rapid urbanization is leading to rapid motorization which has contributed to issues of road congestion, parking problems and deteriorating road safety.
- **Increased pollution:** Most of the major cities in India are reeling under poor air quality due to issues like vehicular emissions, generation of dust etc. Further, discharge of untreated sewage and industrial effluents into the nearby rivers also degrades the water sources.
- **Rising crime rates:** According to NCRB, there has been an increasing trend of urban crimes in India, particularly against vulnerable sections like women, children and elderly population.

#### Steps taken by the government in recent times

- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Housing for All (Urban):** It was launched to provide housing to all in urban areas by 2022.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban):** It aims to eliminate open defecation, manual scavenging, introduce modern and scientific solid waste management and augment the capacity of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) among others.
- **Smart Cities Mission:** It aims at driving economic growth and improving the quality of life through area-based development and city-level smart solutions.
- **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT):** It was launched to incentivize governance reforms in the cities and provide hard infrastructure for universal coverage of piped drinking water, sewerage and green spaces and parks.
- **Deen Dayal Antodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihood Mission (DAY – NULM):** It aims at creating opportunities for skill development leading to market based employment and helping the poor to set up self-employment ventures.
- **Other Initiatives,** such as **National Urban Transport Policy, National Electric Mobility Mission Plan 2020** etc

Along with these initiatives, there is a need to work on funding, planning, capacity building and local governance reforms to manage the expanding urban areas effectively. Further, it is important to decongest the urban areas by developing Tier-2 cities as counter magnets.

#### 5. *Explaining the importance of skill development for India, highlight the challenges related to it. What steps have been taken by the government in this regard?*

##### Approach:

- Introduce by highlighting the situation of skill development in India.
- Explain the importance of skill development for India.
- Discuss the challenges related to skill development.
- Mention the steps taken by the government in this regard.

##### Answer:

India is facing a paradoxical situation where on the one hand, young men and women entering the labour market are looking for employment, while on the other hand, industries are complaining

about unavailability of appropriately skilled manpower. This makes skill development in India imperative to impart marketable skills to labour force.

### Importance of skill development for India

- **Harnessing demographic dividend:** As per the India Skills Report 2016, only 37% (below 30 years) were found employable. Further, a recent WEF report states that around 59 million individuals of working age (15-30 years) are expected to enter the country's labour force by 2023. If this is not addressed timely, it may transform into demographic burden.
- **Dealing with challenges posed by new technologies:** Skill development can help one navigate through the challenges posed by technologies like artificial intelligence. Skilling and re-skilling would help one create those challenges into opportunities.
- **Taking advantage of global opportunities:** Most of the major economies of the world are transforming into ageing societies, creating space for skilled people from other countries. India can fill this space by providing skilled human resources.
- **Contributing to the economy:** As per the World Trade Organization, India can increase its GDP by 3-5% by 2035, if it is able to focus on skill development and training.

### Challenges

- **Insufficient capacity to impart skills:** The skill training capacity of the existing system is only 3.1 million against the 12.8 million new persons joining the labour market annually, as per the India Labour Report 2012.
- **Skills mismatch:** There is inadequate industry-faculty interaction because of which the skill sets provided by the educational and training institutes do not end up suiting the employers' requirements.
- **Lack of standardization:** Various courses are offered by ministries but there is no single comprehensive model addressing all the concerns of this sector resulting in confusion amongst students. This is further compounded by rapidly changing technology, which raises requirements of higher order skill sets.
- **Lack of initiatives from industry:** Industry, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs) prefer to hire untrained or semi-trained workers at a cheaper payout. Further, the wage structure of labour is also not commensurate with the skills present with them, which does not motivate them to acquire new skills.
- **Gender disparities:** Due to the challenge of providing facilities like female teachers, hostels and transport and flexible courses, most of skill programmes are not focusing on trades, which hire females.

### Steps taken by the government

- **Skill India** was launched to train over 40 crore people in India in different skills by 2022. It includes **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana** launched for imparting skill training to youth, focusing on improved curricula, recognition of prior learning, better pedagogy and trained instructors.
- **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya - Grameen Kaushal Yojana** was launched to drive the national agenda for inclusive growth, by developing skills and productive capacity of the rural youth from poor families.
- **Pradhan Mantri Yuva Yojana:** It will provide entrepreneurship education and training to over 7 lakh students in 5 years (till 2020-21) through 3050 Institutes
- **Apprenticeship Protsahan Yojana:** It has been started to promote apprenticeship training and incentivize employers who wish to engage apprentices.
- **Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion Scheme (SANKALP):** It is an outcome-oriented project with a focus on the overall skilling ecosystem covering both Central and State agencies.
- **Skill Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement Scheme (STRIVE):** It is an outcome focused schemes marking shift in government's implementation strategy in vocational education and training from inputs to results



- **India International Skill Centre (IISC) program** to counsel and guide potential emigrants

As India seeks to become a leading global economy, it needs to equip its workforce with employable skills and knowledge matching international standards to make India a developed economy.

**6. Bring out the differences between the western concept of secularism and Indian secularism.**

**Approach:**

- Introduce by briefly explaining the principle of secularism.
- Compare and contrast the western and Indian concept of secularism & briefly elaborate upon the main points of difference.
- Conclude briefly on the basis of the above points.

**Answer:**

Secularism is a principle which advocates the separation of religion from state. It promotes freedom within religions, and equality between, as well as within, religions. Further, a secular state must be committed to the principles and goals which are at least partly derived from non-religious sources. Such as peace, religious freedom, freedom from religiously grounded oppression, discrimination and exclusion etc.

However, the nature and extent of separation between the state and religion depend upon the specific values that a country promotes and the way in which these values are spelt out.

**Difference between Western Concept of Secularism and Indian Secularism**

Western Secularism	Indian Secularism
It advocates mutually exclusive separation between the state and religion in own affair, i.e. the state will not intervene in the affairs of religion and, in the same manner, religion will not interfere in the affairs of the state.	Equal protection by the state to all religions. This means that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secular state to be one that protects all religions, but does not favor one at the cost of other.</li> <li>• It does not adopt any religion as state religion.</li> </ul>
The state can neither aid any religious institution nor hinder their religious activities performed within the law of the land. It considers religion as a private matter, not a matter of state policy or law.	The state can regulate or restrict any economic, financial, political or other secular activities associated with religious practices.
It interpretes freedom and equality in an individualistic manner. There is little scope for community-based rights or minority rights. For example -the liberty of a community to follow practices of its own choosing may not be protected by the state.	It provides for freedom and equality of not only an individual but also for community based rights or minority based rights. For Example- Under Article 29 and 30 of the Indian Constitution religious minorities also have a right to exist and to maintain their own culture and educational institutions.
It does not support the idea of state supported religious reform. The state maintains an arm's length distance from religion in all matters.	Indian secularism allows for principled state intervention in all religions to eliminate regressive practices. For instance- it bans untouchability.

Therefore, Indian secularism is fundamentally different from Western secularism. The Indian model of secularism is distinct as it is a result of interaction between the existing religious diversity in Indian society and the ideas from the West.

## 7. Analyse the role of civil services in a democracy like India.

### Approach:

- Give a brief account on civil services in India and its evolution in India.
- Discuss the importance of civil services for a democratic country like India.
- Briefly mention the various challenges to civil services.
- Suggest a few reforms to address the aforementioned challenges in the conclusion.

### Answer:

Civil services refer to the permanent executive branch of the State's administration, excluding the military and the judicial branch. The Indian civil services are modeled on the pre-independence administrative system of the British, which is essentially a hierarchical and merit-based career system with accountability to the political executive.

Civil services are the backbone of the administrative system in India which play a significant role such as:

- **Implementation of Laws:** Civil servants uphold the rule of law and secure public order in the society.
- **Public Service Delivery:** Civil servants perform the welfare and regulatory functions of the government by delivering the promised goods and services to the intended beneficiaries.
- **Participation in policy formulation:** Civil servants participate in policy making by giving advice to ministers and providing them the necessary information on various issues.
- **Provides continuity:** Civil services carry on the governance when governments change due to elections. They provide for a stable administration without any political bias.
- **Role in socio-economic development:** Civil servants play an important role in setting priorities and goals for development and also mobilize resources to achieve these goals. Further, they assist in capacity development of human resources.
- **Facilitating participatory democracy:** Civil servants secure the support of the people for developmental activities by **involving them in the process**. Further, they facilitate the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions at the grassroots level.
- **Role in exigencies:** Civil servants are the first responders to any calamity or hazard. They assist the people in these difficult times and also play a crucial role in restoring normalcy in these areas.

While the achievements of the public services have been praiseworthy in dealing with the vast expanded responsibilities since independence, they are often deficient in crucial areas such as productivity, responsiveness, accountability and integrity. This has been due to:

- **Out-dated laws, rules and procedures:** These combined with the rigid organization structures and cumbersome procedures lead to a lot of delays and inefficiencies. Thus, the end result that is the welfare of the people is often compromised
- **Poor accountability:** The internal system of accountability of civil servants has been dysfunctional and therefore, the quality of administration and governance deteriorates
- **Elitist, authoritarian and conservative outlook:** Ignorant attitude of the civil servants towards the people further alienates them from the ground realities.
- **Lack of expertise:** Poor training methods and political patronisation provide no motivation to civil servants to build their own capacity or expertise in certain areas.
- **Degrading value system:** Inefficiencies in administration and poor outcomes are often a result of lack of ethical and moral values including probity in public life, respect for human rights and compassion for the downtrodden and commitment to their welfare.

In this context, several reforms have been proposed by various committees and commissions such as the Hota Committee, 2<sup>nd</sup> ARC etc. It has recommended measures for objective performance evaluation, insulation from political interference and provision for mid-career capacity building.

## 8. Examine the impact of globalization on Indian society.

### Approach:

- Define globalization briefly in the introduction.
- Then discuss the positive impacts of globalization on Indian society.

- Also discuss negative impacts of globalization on Indian society.
- Conclude on the basis of above discussions.

**Answer:**

**Globalization** is a process of increasing interdependence, interconnectedness and integration of economies and society to such an extent that an event in one part of the globe affects people in other parts of the world. The effect of globalization is far reaching and affects different section of the society differently.

#### **Positive impacts of globalization on Indian society:**

- **Indian culture:** Globalization has effected Indian culture in many ways. For instance, **revival of yoga** in the country as well as at the international level, revival of **ayurvedic medicine** and increased demand for **local handicrafts**. Also, due to increasing global tourism, locals are making efforts to preserve their diversity and revive their traditions.
- **Women in India:** It created new opportunities for women to be forerunner in economic and social progress leading to self-sufficiency and independence. Liberal ideas have spread to India making women more vocal about their rights, especially in areas of equality with men.
- **Youth in India:** It has improved educational and employment opportunities for the youth entering into the workforce.
- **Impact on caste system:** Owing to the expansion of economic opportunities, education and liberal thoughts, there has been weakening of the caste system in India. **Inter caste marriages** are becoming more common and are being accepted gradually.
- **Socio-economic impact:** It has led to an increase in **innovation** in the economy and has pushed the culture of start-ups in the country. There has been a boost to urbanization and industrialization resulting in increased incomes and better standard of living for people.

However, globalization has also impacted the Indian society negatively, since its impact depends on various factors **like economic condition, accessibility, literacy etc.**

#### **Negative impacts of globalization on Indian Society:**

- **Family system:** There have been arguments that joint family system is being replaced by nuclear families due to globalization. Some have also argued that the importance of marriage is decreasing and there has been an increase in divorce rates, live in relationships and single parenting. These changes have been seen in poor light by many.
- **Women:** Women are mostly crowded in low paying jobs. Also, they are suffering two-fold as their domestic responsibilities are not shared.
- **Youth:** It has led to an increase in uncertainty among youth, weakening social relations, increase in cases of depressions and suicide. It has also led to increased drug abuse, juvenile delinquency etc.
- **Inequality** It has widened the class difference as sections of society with more accessibility and resources mostly benefit from it and marginalized sections get even more marginalized.
- **Resources:** It has led to increased competition for natural resources keeping aside environmental concerns and sustainability principles thus creating discontent in the society.

Globalization is a double-edged sword and reality which here to stay. However, the government follow policy approach where the negative effects of globalization are minimized to the maximum extent possible.

#### **9. Mention the major focus areas for the Jal Shakti Abhiyan and highlight the strategies for its implementation.**

**Approach:**

- Introduction by highlighting the water scarcity in India.
- Enlist the objective of Jal Shakti Abhiyan.
- Mention the key focus areas of this programme.
- Elaborate on the strategies for its implementation and conclude briefly.

**Answer:**

According to a **Niti Aayog report** on water, nearly **600 million Indians** face high to extreme water stress and 75% households do not have drinking water on their premises. India's annual per capita



availability of water fell from **1820 cubic meters in 2001 to 1545 in 2011 and is estimated to fall to the level of 1341 cubic meters by 2025.**

Facing an imminent water crisis, the government has launched **Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA)**, an intensive water conservation campaign built on citizen participation to accelerate water conservation and water security across the country.

The Jal Shakti Abhiyan seeks to **integrate demand and supply-side management** of water at the local levels with focus on water stressed districts and blocks. **The major focus areas are:**

- Water conservation and rainwater harvesting
- Renovation of traditional and other water bodies/tanks
- Creation of local infrastructure for source sustainability which includes reuse and recharge structures
- Watershed development
- Intensive afforestation

**Various strategies** have been planned under the Abhiyan to meet the objectives and sensitize the local communities about water conservation. Some of them being:

- **Collaboration and coordination:** It would include the collaborative efforts of different ministries and departments including the state governments to be coordinated by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- **Intervention teams:** The central government has designated a nodal officer and an 18-point to-do list has been issued to them. These officers along with their teams would work with district administration in water stressed blocks in 256 districts, to ensure important water conservation interventions.
- **Research support:** Scientists and expert teams from IITs to be mobilized at the national level to support the teams implementing the programmes.
- **Use of technology:** 3D Village Contour Maps may be created and made accessible for efficient planning of interventions.
- **Convergence with MGNREGA:** A detailed plan of over 200,000 works to be taken up for water conservation in nearly 1,100 water-stressed districts has been drawn.
- **Awareness campaigns:** A large scale communications programme has been planned to spread awareness. This would include all the stakeholders including school students, Self Help Groups, Panchayati Raj Institution members etc.

Therefore, the Jal Shakti Abhiyan is an effort by the government to create a jan-andolan along the lines of the Swachh Bharat Mission, to overcome the challenges of water conservation in India which mainly include lack of awareness among citizens, poor government policies formulation and implementation, increasing water pollution, unscientific agricultural practices, lack of water reuse etc.

**10. Mentioning the various forms of diversity in India, highlight the factors that facilitate unity amongst such diversity.**

**Approach:**

- Introduce by giving a brief account on the diversity of India.
- Highlight the various forms in which diversity manifests itself in India.
- Throw some light upon factors that promote unity in diversity.
- Conclude on the basis of aforementioned points.

**Answer:**

India is a plural society consisting of multiple cultures, religions and languages. Diversity is one of the characteristic features of the Indian society. However, diversity in India does not mean inequalities but signifies the presence of collective differences, that is, differences which mark off one group of people from another. The various forms of diversity in India are:

- **Religious diversity:** India is a land of multiple religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism. These religions are not homogeneous and there exists different

sects within one religion. For instance- There are numerous jati in Hinduism. Similarly, Islam is divided into sects such as Shias, Sunnis, Ahmadiyas etc. The presence of different tribal groups having their own religious beliefs further adds to the diversity.

- **Racial diversity:** The 1931 census classified India's racial diversity into various groups like Negrito, Proto-Australoid, Mongoloid, Mediterranean, Western Brachycephals and Nordic.
- **Cultural diversity:** Different religions, castes, regions follow their own tradition and culture. Thus, there is variation in art, architecture, dance forms, theatre forms, music etc. Also, this also reflects itself in the diversity in the literary ideas, philosophies, conventions, and literature all over India.
- **Linguistic diversity:** There are more than 1600 languages spoken in India as recorded by the 1961 census. Spatial and cultural differences between Indian people ensures the presence of a rich linguistic diversity in India.
- **Geographical diversity:** India is a vast country with great diversity of physical features like dry deserts, evergreen forests, lofty mountains, perennial and non-perennial river systems, long coasts and fertile plains.

Despite its diversity, India has been able to ensure the peaceful co-existence of different communities in the society due to the following factors:

- **Constitutional Mechanism:** The Constitution provides a uniform set of laws (generally) and a common governance system throughout the country. Further, the Constitution guarantees certain fundamental rights to all citizens regardless of their age, gender, class, caste, religion etc.
- **Tolerance:** Tolerance is a feature unique to India due to which multiple religions co-exist in India. This is because the Indian society has evolved through amalgamation of elements borrowed from various cultures & faiths.
- **Pilgrimage and religious practices:** In India, religion and spirituality have great significance. Pilgrimage centers like Kumbh Mela, Amarnath etc. attract people from various parts of the country and fostered in them a sense of geo-cultural unity.
- **Sports and Cinema:** These are followed by millions in the country, thus, acting as a binding force across the length and breadth of India.
- **Festivals:** People celebrate festivals like Independence Day, Republic Day and Gandhi Jayanti. People also celebrate different religious festivals together like Diwali, Eid, Holi, Christmas.
- **Legacy of great leaders:** Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda etc. have taught the values of universal brotherhood and peaceful coexistence. These teaching acts as a binding force among people in India.
- **Economic integration:** The Constitution of India secures the freedom of Trade, Commerce and Intercourse within the Territory of India under Article 301. Further, the Goods and Service Tax (GST) has paved way for 'one country, one tax, one national market', thus facilitating unity among different regions.

India has been able to sustain unity in diversity which means "unity without uniformity" and "diversity without fragmentation". It is essentially based on the notion that diversity enriches human interaction. For this reason, the diversity in India is regarded as a source of strength rather than a weakness.

**11. Explain the reasons behind low participation of women in the labour force. How can the situation be improved?**

**Approach:**

- Introduce by giving a brief account on the state of participation of women in the labour force.
- Highlight the low participation of women & enumerate the reasons for the same.
- Suggest measures to enhance labour force participation of women.
- Conclude briefly on the basis of the above points.

**Answer:**

According to a report of the International Labour Organization, India's female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) fell from around 31% in 2011-12 to around 23% in 2017-18. Also, during the peak working age (25-60 years), more than 96% males are in the labour force as

compared to around 37% (rural) females and 25% (urban) females. The FLFPR in India has been one of the lowest among the emerging economies.

There are various reasons behind poor participation of women in the labour force, such as:

- **Social Norms and Agency:** Deep-rooted social norms, lack of agency and gendering of occupations often leads to women having little choice in their employment and work decisions. In some communities, stigma may be attached to women working outside the home, which increases family and societal pressures to drop out.
- **Lack of comprehensive policy support and effective implementation:** Few policies focus on providing support services, such as lodging, safe and convenient travel, migration support and childcare that enable women to access skilling programmes or be a part of the workforce.
- **Education-Employment Trade-off:** The employment opportunities have not kept pace with the large supply of women looking for better jobs. Therefore, more educated women do not wish to work in jobs that do not match with their aspirations.
- **Competing Outcomes of the Household and Labour Market:** A large proportion of the women who left the labour market are married. Also, husband's income (and education) contributes to the withdrawal of women from the labour force through a household income effect.
- **Maternity factor:** Many women who join the workforce are unable to re-join after having a child. The compulsions under Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017 and corresponding increased cost for companies may discourage them in hiring women. Non-availability of quality day-care is also a factor, which inhibits women from returning to work after their maternity leave.

Several steps can be taken to improve the female LFPR such as:

- **Reorienting Policy Design:** Modifying outcome metrics for labour market programmes by including enabling factors such as safety, aspiration alignment etc. Convergence with programmes for adult education, literacy and advanced skill training and higher education.
- **Incentivising female-friendly policies:** Using tax policies to incentivise women into the labour market on both the demand and supply side. By introducing tax incentives for enterprises that have internal complaint mechanisms, gender friendly transport services etc.
- **Behavioural and Communication Change:** Investing in social campaigns for changing social norms which break gender stereotypes. Here, the role of civil society organisations is crucial.
- **Support Services:** Providing support services such as counselling, accommodation, referrals etc. to women who migrate in search of employment. Developing forums for informal and formal mentorship by female role models and women in leadership.

Women's labour force participation and access to decent work are important and necessary elements of an inclusive and sustainable development process. Therefore, multiple steps need to be taken at different levels to ensure the economic empowerment of women. As per IMF chief, raising women's participation in the labour force to the same level as men can boost India's GDP by 27 per cent.

## **12. Write a brief note on the role of SHGs in rural development in India.**

**Approach:**

- Briefly define SHGs and explain their functioning.
- Discuss the role played by SHGs in rural development in India.
- Conclude by suggesting some measures to improve their functioning.

**Answer:**

Self Help Groups (SHGs) are self-governed, peer controlled information groups of people with similar socio-economic background and desire to collectively perform common purpose. They play a critical role in the process of rural development by organizing poor and marginalized sections of the society in a collective to build their functional capacity by promoting small savings and ensure sustainable livelihood.

Following are some of the roles played by the SHGs in the process of rural development:

- **Capital Formation:** In SHGs, members save through thrift by cutting down expenditure due to peer/group pressure. These continued and sustained savings leads to credit generation and capital formation, which is used for vocational activities. Thus, providing **self-employment and sustained income to the rural poor**.
- **Access to credit:** SHGs have addressed the issues of access to credit, collateral and non-institutional lenders. Initiatives like Priority Sector Lending (PSL) and SHG-Bank linkages have reduced the transaction cost for both borrower and lenders. This has made entrepreneurship easy and affordable for SHGs and their members.
- **Women Empowerment:** About 46 million rural women have been mobilized through the SHG architecture. It has helped these women become economically independent, raising their social capital and enabling them to combat social evils like dowry and alcoholism. E.g. Kudumsree in Kerala, SEWA etc.
- **Development of natural resources:** SHGs have been involved in developmental work like soil conservation, watershed development, horticulture development, dry land development, desert area development, social forestry development etc.
- **Technology upgradation:** SHGs have contributed for adoption of newer technologies that are appropriate to local conditions. Some SHGs have evolved locally adaptable rainwater harvesting technologies, drip irrigation etc.
- **Employment Generation:** SHGs have engaged their members in non-farm sector income generating activities such as apparel and readymade clothes, leather products, pottery, toys, household consumables.
- **Rural demand:** Improved income has altered the consumption pattern of participating households and raised the expenditure on food, health and education.
- **Raising social and health profile:** Improved economic and social conditions have helped reduce child mortality, improve maternal health and the ability of the poor to combat disease through better nutrition, housing and health – especially among women and children.

Though, SHGs have been instrumental in move towards rural development, various steps like widening the marketing networks of the SHGs, inclusion of the poorest of the poor in the SHG network, imparting skill training and financial literacy with technological support is needed for furthering the cause of SHGs and achieving rural development.

### 13. *Highlighting their significance, discuss the issues with Citizen's Charter in India.*

#### **Approach:**

- Introduce by defining Citizen's Charter and its objective.
- Proceed to discuss the significance of Citizen's Charter.
- Analyse the issues facing Citizen's Charter in India.
- Conclude by suggesting a way forward.

#### **Answer:**

A Citizen's Charter is a document of commitments made by an organization regarding the delivery of services to citizens with specified standards, quality and time frame. It seeks to make an organisation transparent, accountable and citizen friendly. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Administrative Reforms Commission describes it as a tool to ensure that the citizen is always at the heart of any service delivery mechanism.

The Citizen's Charter initiative in India **started in 1997**. The basic **objective** of the Citizen's Charter is to empower the citizens in relation to public service delivery.

#### **Significance of Citizen's Charter:**

- It **enshrines trust** between the service provider and its users.
- It ushers in a regime of **transparency and openness**.
- It enhances administrative efficiency and promotes **good governance**.
- It helps to **enhance the quality** of the services to be provided.
- It **offers people choices**, wherever it can be made available.
- It promotes **citizen centric governance** as people can direct its implementation to the organization and the government.



### Issues with formulation and implementation of Citizen's Charter:

- **Non-existent and out-dated Charters:** Citizen's Charters have still not been adopted by all Ministries/Departments/Organisations in the Government of India. Old Citizen's Charters have not been revised to reflect the new commitments of ministries.
- **Bureaucratic rigidity:** There is resistance from government officials to change their way of working leading to poor implementation of Citizen's Charters.
- **Unrealistic targets:** The standards and/or time norms of services are sometimes too lax or too tight and create an unfavourable impression on the clients/citizens.
- **Lack of consultative process:** Most of Citizen's Charters are formulated through a top-down approach without consultation with all the stakeholders.
- **Lack of training:** The employees responsible for its implementation lack proper training, sensitization and awareness of spirit of the Charters.
- **Lack of awareness amongst citizens:** Awareness campaigns to educate clients about Citizen's charters are not conducted systematically. Citizens are not always aware of their rights.
- **Absence of Grievance Redressal Mechanism:** The non-justiciable nature of Citizen's Charters and delays in grievance redressal erode their effectiveness.

Various steps can be taken towards resolving these issues such as greater stakeholder consultation, realistic goal setting, adequate infrastructure and training, continuous monitoring and evaluation of results etc. Some of the best practices such as the SEVOTTAM model of the postal department can be replicated in other departments.

### 14. Discuss the role of women's organisations in bringing about gender justice in India.

#### Approach:

- Briefly explain the meaning of gender justice.
- Explain ways in which women's organizations have aided the cause of gender justice in India.
- Conclude appropriately.

#### Answer:

**Gender justice** means equality and equity across genders in all spheres of life in defining and shaping the policies, structures and decisions that affect their lives and society as a whole. It is indispensable for development, poverty reduction, and is crucial to achieving a progressive society.

#### Women's organisations and gender justice:

Women's empowerment is the major issue taken up by these organisations. They are playing a crucial role to bring gender justice and policy reforms in following ways:

- **Right to vote:** Women's India Association (1917), All India Women Conference (1926) and National Council for Women in India (1925) played a key role in inclusion of suffrage and other political rights to women through the Indian Constitution.
- **Fight against sexual harassment at workplace:** Group for Women's Education and Research along with four other women's organisations fought against the rape of Bhanwari Devi, a social worker in Rajasthan government which ultimately led to **Vishakha Guidelines** in 1997 and an enabling legislation in 2013.
- **Domestic violence:** Women's organisations such as Forum Against Oppression of Women (Mumbai), Saheli (Delhi) etc. campaigned for around 30 years which finally led to enactment of *Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005*.
- **Maternity benefits:** Women's organisations are continuously fighting for unconditional paid maternity leave in all sectors. This movement got policy support in the form of amendment brought to *Maternity Benefits Act 2017* when paid leave was increased from 12 weeks to 26 weeks.
- **Personal laws:** Bebaak Collective and Bhartiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA) played an important role in Shayra Bano Case where Supreme Court declared triple talaq as unconstitutional, which ultimately led to the passage of the *Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019*



- **Entry to places of religious worship:** More than 100 women organisations fought for restricted entry of women in Sabarimala temple, which led to the court eventually declaring the practice as unconstitutional.

There are several other women's organisations which have worked tirelessly to bring legislative reforms e.g. amendments in the Hindu Succession Act for inheritance rights of women, life sentence to those involved in acid attack, unjust family laws, and reproductive rights of women. They are also campaigning for women's reservation in the Legislature, so that gender justice can be fully attained in the country.

**15. Literacy rates vary considerably across gender, regions and social groups in India. Elaborate. Also, suggest measures to improve the situation.**

**Approach:**

- Make use of facts & figures to highlight the literacy rate in India.
- Demonstrate how literacy rates vary across gender, regions and social groups in India & list reasons for the same.
- State some measures to bring out parity in terms of literacy rates in the country.

**Answer:**

The literacy rate in India has improved from 64.8% (2001) to 74.04% (2011) as per the Census 2011, however this improvement has not been uniform across gender, regions and various social groups across India, such as:

- **Gender:** According to the 2011 Census, male literacy rate in India is 82.14% while female literacy rate is 65.46%. Low female literacy rate is linked to low enrollment due to patriarchal mindset, low retention due to infrastructural constraints.
- **Regional disparity:** The southern states have a higher literacy rate in comparison to the northern states, primarily due to higher economic development. For instance, there is a large regional variation in literacy such as literacy rate of 93.91% in Kerala compared to 63.82% in Bihar.
- **Religious groups:** At 57.3%, Muslims have the lowest literacy rate, while Jains, at 86.4%, have the highest rate, according to the 2011 Census. This is due to smaller population size and concentration of Jains in urban areas with greater access to education.
- **Socially disadvantaged groups:** The literacy rates of Scheduled Castes (around 66%) and Scheduled Tribes (around 59%) remain below the national average due to historical injustices, geographical factors etc.
- **Rural and urban discrepancy:** As per the 71st round report of NSSO, 72.3% males and 56.8% females are literate in rural India, while 83.7% males and 74.8% females are literate in urban India.

**Some of the measures to improve the situation include:**

- There should be greater and **equitable allocation of resources to the education sector**, such as 6% of the GDP as suggested by the Kothari Commission.
- The government should include **skill training into adult literacy programmes**, as it is one of the biggest barriers because they see little utility and relevance for literacy programs.
- The government should promote **volunteerism** as suggested in the draft National Education Policy 2019 where every literate member of community could commit to teach one student/person to attain literacy.
- There should be further work to link madrasas and other **religious educational institutions with higher secondary school boards** and modernise them as suggested by the Sachar Committee Report.
- There should be greater focus on the **states that lag behind in various educational indices** like Jharkhand, Bihar etc. They should emulate the best practices of other states such as 'Schooling Revolution' of Himachal Pradesh.
- The government should work at **incorporating the native curriculum** in the special schools for the tribal groups.

The government is implementing targeted schemes such as 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao', Sarva Sikshya Abhiyaan, Mid-Day Meal etc. It should also provide **special assistance for the advancement** of different social groups in these schemes. Attaining higher literacy rates should be prioritised, as it leads to improvement of economic conditions, social upliftment, population control, higher employment rate and overall growth of the country.

**16. Highlight the issues that the voluntary sector in India faces. How can these issues be addressed?**

**Approach:**

- Introduce by defining voluntary sector.
- Mention the issues plaguing the voluntary sector in India.
- Suggest measures needed to resolve the issues and conclude briefly.

**Answer:**

The 'voluntary sector' refers to organisations whose primary purpose is to create social impact rather than profit. It is often called the third sector, civil society or the not-for-profit sector. It works towards social causes falling out of the government's ambit and plays a crucial role in the growth of a nation, catalyzing social and economic growth.

**Issues that plague the voluntary sector in India include:**

- **Weak ecosystem:** The capacity of voluntary sector organisations is weakened by:
  - Lack of leadership, trained manpower, organizational and technical expertise.
  - Absence of strategic planning that leaves them vulnerable to the whims of donors.
  - Poor networking & lack of funds resulting from negative competition among different NGOs for resources, delays in disbursement or demand matching contributions affecting availability of funds.
- **Transparency issues:** Transparency issues span both matters related to finance as well as visibility/transparency in their activities.
  - Approximately 20,000 NGOs had their registration under FCRA cancelled owing to discrepancies related to finance/funding.
  - Similarly, various instances have been reported recently where the priorities of VOs/NGOs were in divergence with the national interest. For instance, advocacy by Greenpeace on India's coal mines recently impacted developmental work.
- **Domino effect of mistrust:** Negative reputation garnered by some organizations has a domino effect of mistrust that affects the credibility & capacity of the voluntary sector as a whole. Between 2015-18, 40% decline in foreign funding was reported due to such mistrust.
- **Relationship with international NGOs:** Competitive relationship with bigger/international NGOs leaves little room for local NGOs to operate.
- **Political Interference:** Lack of capacity to mobilise funds coupled with donor-recipient relationship with the government negatively affects their willingness to speak against the same.

**Steps that can be undertaken to resolve the issues**

- **Regular capacity building programmes** should be conducted with training modules on plan formulation, fund mobilization, reporting, documentation, skills in Monitoring and Evaluation, Impact Assessment etc.
- Voluntary sector may undertake **collaboration with CSR or other private initiatives**, as it would help them in improving their managerial capabilities, procedural efficiency and governance mechanisms.
- **Rules and regulations** regarding grants to NGOs should be **liberalized** by the government to tackle the paucity of funds. However, it should be accompanied by **periodically appointing commissions of enquiry** or committees to cross check the misuse of funds by NGOs.
- Steps should be taken for **better regulation of the sector** in terms of NGOs' registration and accreditation. This would ensure that their activities are not based on any misplaced priorities.

- There should be an appropriate mechanism to **synchronize the activities of different** local and international voluntary organisations. There should also be resource sharing between these organisations, especially when working in similar problem areas.
- **Increasing transparency in their operations** through regular reporting of the targets achieved, new projects being undertaken, financial transactions etc. would help **reduce mistrust** between the NGOs and the government as well as the public.

Undertaking these measures would enhance the capacity of the voluntary sector and enable it to build an effective partnership with the government as envisaged under the National Policy on Voluntary Sector 2007.

### 17. *Analyse the potential of e-governance in India.*

#### **Approach:**

- Introduce the answer by defining e-governance.
- Highlight the potential of e-governance in India including examples of different initiatives taken by government.
- Discuss the constraints that limits the potential of e-governance in India.
- Give an appropriate conclusion.

#### **Answer:**

As per the World Bank, e-governance can be defined as the use by government agencies of information technologies that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. It aims to create SMART governance which is to provide smart, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent governance.

#### **Potential of e-governance in India**

- **In Government to Citizens**
  - **Better Service Delivery:** Initiatives such as **JAM trinity** has facilitated direct benefit transfers of various government schemes such as MGNREGA, PAHAL etc. directly into the bank accounts of beneficiaries. It has promoted financial inclusion as well as preventing leakages of benefits under schemes.
  - **Easy availability of information:** It would make available timely and reliable information to citizens. For eg- weather-based tracking, rainfall, drones that can assess crops etc. has vast potential for agriculture as can be seen from e-initiatives like **Kisan Suvidha Mobile app, mKisan portal, e-NAM** etc.
  - **Participative Governance:** It can ease the engagement of citizens in the decision making of the government. For eg- **MyGov platform** allows people to share their views on key issues directly.
  - **Grievance redressal mechanism:** It enables single-window handling of grievances of general public. For e.g. **CPGRAM**.
- **In Government to Business**
  - **Ease of doing Business:** Moving to e-platforms enables ease in various dimensions of doing business such as online taxation payment mechanism, registering the company, getting various permits etc.
  - **Reduced time and operational cost:** e-initiatives help integrate several processes, reducing time and cost for businesses. For eg: **e-biz platform of DIPP**.
  - **Bring transparency and cut red tapism:** It helps in reducing government-business nexus and corruption by leaving little room for discretion. **For eg- GeM portal, e-tendering** etc.
- **In Government to Government**
  - **Better monitoring of schemes:** e-governance enables simultaneous monitoring and reviewing of schemes and projects at all levels of government or organisation. For e.g. **PRAGATI**.
  - **Better communication and easy flow of information:** Internet based initiatives enable easy and fast communication which helps in enhancing cooperative federalism, instant data sharing etc.

- **Better personnel management:** It assists the top management in better management of personnel through access to information at one place regarding personnel requirements, retirement pattern, service record of existing personnel etc. For e.g. **eHRMS- Electronic Human Resource Management System**

However, the potential of e-governance in India is limited by the **following constraints:**

- **Technical:** It includes issues such as poor **digital literacy**, **data security** especially in financial transactions, **data privacy** of citizens that is prone to misuse, **lack of interoperability** among ministries and departments which proves to be a hurdle for processing and sharing data etc.
- **Economic:** Huge costs required to fund the implementation of e-governance initiatives coupled with lack of matured technicians and qualified administrators for maintaining and running the digital system is a major constraint in advancing these initiatives in all areas in India.
- **Social:** Certain regions of India are still facing barriers in accessing e-initiatives such as language barrier, lack of accessibility to internet, lack of willingness towards using internet services, unawareness about various benefits on account of illiteracy etc.

Thus, toward building a digital and inclusive India, various measures addressing above challenges need to be undertaken to ensure that e-governance initiatives can help the country achieve its socio-economic and welfare targets.

**18. What is social audit? Give an account of its significance and limitations in India.**

**Approach:**

- Briefly explain the meaning of social audit.
- Discuss its significance as well as the limitations of social audit in the Indian context.
- Conclude on the basis of the above points.

**Answer:**

Social audit is the examination and assessment of a programme/scheme conducted with the active involvement of people and comparing official records with actual ground realities. It is a powerful tool for social transformation, community participation and government accountability.

In India, it has been mandated under various acts such as **National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, National Food Security Act, 2013 etc.** In fact, some states such as Meghalaya have also come up with social audit legislation mandating public audit for various schemes.

**Significance of social audit in the Indian context**

- **Upholds participatory democracy:** People directly observe the implementation of Government programmes in their region making the process participatory. This, in the long run, empowers the people and makes the process of development more inclusive.
- **Accountability and transparency:** By reducing the gap between goal and reality of a social programme, it ensures that intended objectives are fulfilled. It uncovers irregularities and leakages in the implementation of the scheme and acts as a deterrence for the malpractices by the public officials.
- **Provides feedback mechanism:** Social sector scheme in India usually follows top-down approach. Social audit fills a much needed gap by conveying the concerns of beneficiaries and ground realities to the policy makers.
- **Promotes professionalism:** It boosts professionalism as it forces the local bodies to keep proper records and accounts of the spending made against the grants received.

Although, social audit improves efficiency and effectiveness of schemes, benefits marginalized and disadvantaged groups, encourages collective decision-making and helps develop social and human capital, it has been ineffective in most parts of India due to several reasons.

**Limitations of Social Audit in India**

- **Weak state responsiveness:** Lack of support from senior officials is considered a major obstacle to social audit. Further, there is no established **independent agency** to investigate and act on social audit findings.

- **Non-adherence to procedural requirement:** In many states, Social Audit Units do not seek record from Gram Panchayats regarding execution of works and expenditure. Further, audit reports are **either not prepared** or not made available to Gram Sabha in **local languages**.
- **Limited scope:** The scope of social audits is **highly localised** and covers only certain selected aspects out of a wide range of audit concerns in the financial, compliance and performance audits.
- **Lack of awareness:** There is a lack of awareness among Gram Sabha members about their powers and responsibilities regarding social audit. Further, people in villages also do not show much interest owing to livelihood and other issues.
- **Inadequate capacity:** As the government has **not institutionalized** the Social audit mechanism, auditors are left vulnerable to the implementing agencies which are unsupportive and resist disclosure of information.

Social audit, if implemented in letter and spirit, has the potential to be a game-changer for India's social sector. The state should provide it with necessary institutional, administrative and financial help. The success of **Society for Social Audit, Accountability and Transparency (SAAT)** in **Andhra Pradesh** should be replicated across the country.

**19. Give an account of the challenges that the government has been facing in eliminating malnutrition in India.**

**Approach:**

- Introduce by defining malnutrition and highlighting the trends related to malnutrition in India.
- Enumerate the challenges faced by the government in eliminating malnutrition.
- Conclude by suggesting a way forward.

**Answer:**

Malnutrition refers to deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in intake of energy and/or nutrients. It covers undernutrition (stunting, wasting, underweight and micronutrient deficiencies), along with overweight, obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases such as diabetes.

India ranked 102 out of 117 countries in **Global Hunger Index 2019**, reported as '**serious level of hunger**'. Further, India has the highest number of stunted (46.6 million) and wasted (25.5 million) children in the world. Additionally, more than a million children are overweight and around 40% women (15-49 years) are anemic.

There are several challenges in elimination of malnutrition in India, which include:

- **Economic inequality:** Due to the low income of some population groups, their diet often lacks in both quality and quantity, as they are unable to afford protein-based diet, fruits, vegetables etc.
- **Food production-accessibility paradox:** Food grain yields have risen by 33% over the last two decades, however, access to food has not increased at the same rate due to population growth, inequality, food wastage etc.
- **Regional variation:** Underdevelopment and failure of public service delivery mechanisms in states like Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh etc have led to the highest levels of stunting and underweight.
- **Interlinked factors:** Malnutrition results not only from lack of nutrients in food but also a diverse set of interlinked factors such as healthcare, education, sanitation, women's empowerment etc. which require multidimensional interventions.
- **Inefficient Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS):** Despite providing critical nutritional supplement to the poor, the inefficient targeting of TPDS dents the capacity of the poorest 30% of households to access food.
- **Increasing unhealthy diet:** Nutritional intake from cereals has decreased in both rural and urban India, and is largely substituted by relatively unhealthy food choices such as fast food, processed food, and sugary beverages.
- **Lack of awareness:** There is a lack of awareness about the nutritional needs of infants, young children, pregnant women etc. This issue is compounded by illiteracy among women.



- **Insufficient data availability:** This acts as a hindrance in understanding the overall nutritional status and effectiveness of nutrition-related schemes, thereby affecting the developmental efforts of the government.

With the goal of reducing malnutrition, the government has launched **POSHAN Abhiyaan** and **National Nutrition Strategy**, which aims to accelerate decline of malnutrition in India and call for a synergised approach among different ministries/departments. However, more effort needs to be taken in this regard such as schemes for agricultural diversification, improving targeting efficiency of TPDS, increase awareness among women, etc. to attain high coverage, quality, equity and better outcomes etc.

**20. Bring out the successes and failures of the Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) PCPNDT Act, 1994.**

**Approach:**

- Briefly introduce the PCPNDT Act, 1994 and state its provisions.
- Highlight the successes and failures of the PCPNDT Act, 1994.
- Conclude by mentioning the measures needed to overcome its failures.

**Answer:**

The Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act (PCPNDT), 1994 was enacted to prevent female foeticide and arrest the declining sex ratio in India. It was amended in 2003 to improve the regulation of the technology used in sex selection. The salient provisions of the Act include registration of clinics, criminalisation of non-maintenance of medical records, prohibition on communicating the sex of foetus, and creating awareness among the public at large by constituting a Central Supervisory Board to perform these functions.

**Successes of the law include:**

- **Increase in sex ratio in some states:** For example, effective implementation of the Act has been identified as one of the prominent reasons in increasing sex ratio in Rajasthan where it increased from 888 in 2011 census to 950 in 2017-18.
- **Increase in registrations of PCPNDT clinics:** They have increased from 600 in 2000 to more than 55,000 today.
- **Check on advertisements for sex selection:** This includes print media, television, walls around the country, among others. It was later extended to online advertisements via Google, Yahoo etc.
- **Increased ambit of the law:** Under the amendment of 2003, which brought ultrasound under its ambit and regulated the sale of ultrasound machines only to registered bodies. Also, there are provisions for more stringent punishments to improve the effectiveness of the Act.

**Failures of the law are:**

- **Poor reporting under the law:** Only around 4200 cases have been filed against violators of the Act, since it came into effect, though at least 45 million medical crimes of determination and elimination have been committed.
- **Poor conviction rate:** There are only 586 convictions out of 4202 cases registered even after 25 years of its existence.
- **Presence of unqualified personnel:** People turn to unqualified personnel such as quacks, nurses, for getting abortions done.
- **Overall drop in child sex ratio:** Sex ratio for the age group of 0-6 years has declined to 918 girls per thousand boys in 2011 as against 927 girls per thousand boys in 2001.

Implementation of the PCPNDT Act requires a more systemic involvement of the state and enactment of legislation is only the first step in this direction. Government schemes such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao have yielded appreciable results in states like Haryana. Further, doctors and other professional staff in diagnostic clinics need to play a more proactive role and must be further sensitised on the importance of the issue.