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From

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INDEX

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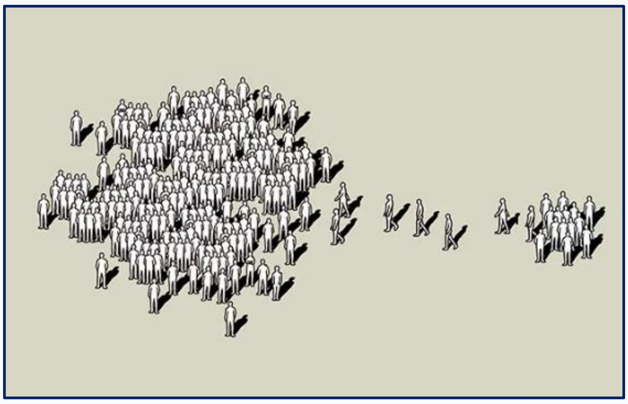
GENERAL STUDIES 2

1.1. POLITY & GOVERNANCE

1.1.1. POLITICAL DEFECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY



Context

Recurring political defections have raised concerns over the sanctity of the electoral mandate, constitutional morality, democratic accountability, and the effectiveness of the Anti-Defection Law in strengthening India's parliamentary democracy.

Introduction

Political defection when an elected representative abandons the party on whose mandate they were elected raises concerns over constitutional morality, representative democracy, public trust, and the sanctity of the people's mandate.

Constitutional and Institutional Framework

1. **Tenth Schedule (Anti-Defection Law), 1985**
    - Introduced through the **52nd Constitutional Amendment Act**.
    - Seeks to prevent unprincipled defections and ensure stability of elected governments.
2. **91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003**
    - Strengthened anti-defection provisions.
    - Limited the size of the Council of Ministers.
    - Removed protection for one-third splits while retaining provisions relating to mergers.
3. **Constitutional Provisions**
    - **Article 102** – Disqualification of Members of Parliament.
    - **Article 191** – Disqualification of Members of State Legislatures.

Important Judicial Pronouncements

Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillhu (1992)

- Upheld constitutional validity of the Tenth Schedule.
- Allowed judicial review of the Speaker's decisions.

Nabam Rebia (2016)

- Restricted the Speaker's powers when a motion for removal is pending.

Keisham Meghachandra Singh (2020)

- Suggested that disqualification petitions should ordinarily be decided within three months.

Why Do Political Defections Occur?

1. **Quest for Political Power:** Legislators may switch parties to secure ministerial positions, greater political influence, or a role in government.

2. **Electoral Survival:** Changing political equations and shifting voter preferences often encourage leaders to join parties perceived as electorally stronger.
3. **Ideological and Leadership Differences:** Policy disagreements, factionalism, or dissatisfaction with party leadership may lead to political realignment.
4. **Weak Internal Party Democracy:** Centralised decision-making and limited opportunities for internal dissent reduce party cohesion and increase the likelihood of defections.
5. **Institutional and Political Incentives:** Loopholes in the Anti-Defection Law, delays in disqualification, and the prospects of political patronage lower the costs and raise the incentives for defection.

Concerns Arising from Political Defections

1. **Erosion of Democratic Mandate and Constitutional Morality:** Defections undermine the electoral mandate by altering the people's verdict without seeking a fresh mandate, weakening **popular sovereignty** and **constitutional morality**.
2. **Weakening of Representative Democracy and Accountability:** Frequent defections dilute representative democracy by prioritising individual political interests over party ideology, reducing accountability of elected representatives towards voters.
3. **Institutional Instability and Governance Deficit:** Delayed disqualification proceedings, questions over the Speaker's neutrality, and loopholes in the Anti-Defection Law create governance uncertainty and weaken institutional credibility.
4. **Decline of Healthy Democratic Competition:** Defections weaken the Opposition, reduce legislative scrutiny and policy debates, thereby disturbing the system of **checks and balances** essential for parliamentary democracy.
5. **Rise of Opportunistic and Personality-Centric Politics:** Weak internal party democracy, personality-driven politics, and political incentives encourage transactional politics over ideology, undermining ethical political conduct.
6. **Declining Public Trust in Democratic Institutions:** Frequent defections foster voter cynicism, reduce confidence in political institutions, and diminish the legitimacy of democratic governance.

Committee Recommendations

- **Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990):** Suggested limiting the whip only to votes affecting government stability.
- **Law Commission (170th Report):** Recommended strengthening internal democracy within political parties.
- **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC):** Favoured reforms to strengthen political accountability while protecting democratic dissent.
- **Second Administrative Reforms Commission:** Emphasised ethics, transparency and accountability in public life.

Way Forward

1. **Strengthen Constitutional Morality and Ethical Leadership:** Political conduct should be guided by constitutional values, democratic ethics, and public trust through stronger codes of conduct and ethical leadership.

2. **Reform the Anti-Defection Framework:** Establish an **independent adjudicatory mechanism** and introduce **time-bound disposal** of defection cases to ensure impartiality and legal certainty.
3. **Deepen Internal Party Democracy:** Promote transparent candidate selection, intra-party elections, and ideological commitment to reduce opportunistic defections.
4. **Rationalise the Party Whip:** Restrict the whip to confidence motions, money bills, and other matters affecting government stability, while allowing greater legislative deliberation on ordinary bills.
5. **Enhance Democratic Accountability:** Increase transparency in political realignments, encourage informed voter participation, and strengthen electoral accountability to preserve the sanctity of the people's mandate.
6. **Strengthen Institutions and Constitutional Awareness:** Improve coordination among the Legislature, Election Commission, and Judiciary while promoting civic and constitutional education to reinforce democratic values.
7. **Preserve Competitive Democracy:** Ensure a balance between **stable governments and a credible opposition**, thereby strengthening checks and balances, legislative oversight, and democratic resilience.

Thinkers' Perspective

- **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**: Constitutional morality is indispensable for the successful working of the Constitution.
- **Aristotle**: Good governance exists when public office serves the common good rather than private interest.
- **Kautilya**: The legitimacy of governance ultimately depends upon the confidence and welfare of the people.

Conclusion

The legitimacy of democracy lies not only in winning elections but also in respecting the people's mandate. Strengthening constitutional morality and democratic institutions is key to safeguarding India's parliamentary democracy.

Q. *Political defections are not merely questions of legislative arithmetic but challenges to constitutional morality and democratic accountability. Examine. Discuss the limitations of the Anti-Defection Law and suggest reforms to strengthen India's parliamentary democracy. 15 Marks*

1.1.2. INTERNET SHUTDOWNS IN INDIA

Context

Recently, mobile internet services were temporarily suspended in parts of Delhi during a large public demonstration. The incident has once again brought the issue of **internet shutdowns** into national focus, raising important questions regarding the balance between **public order**, **national security**, and **citizens' fundamental rights**.

Introduction

- Recognising its growing importance, the Supreme Court has observed that access to the internet is intrinsically linked to the exercise of **freedom of speech and expression** under **Article 19(1)(a)** and the **freedom to practice any profession or carry on trade** under **Article 19(1)(g)**.
- While the State possesses the authority to temporarily suspend internet services during genuine emergencies, such actions must satisfy the constitutional principles of **legality, necessity, proportionality and accountability**.

What is an Internet Shutdown?

- According to digital rights organisations, an **internet shutdown** is an intentional disruption of internet or electronic communication services, making them inaccessible or significantly unusable for a specific population or geographical area.
- Internet shutdowns may involve complete suspension of internet services, blocking mobile internet, restricting access to specific websites or social media platforms, reducing internet speed (throttling).

Why are Internet Shutdowns Imposed?

Governments generally impose internet shutdowns to:

- Maintain **public order** during protests and civil disturbances preventing the spread of misinformation and fake news.
- Prevent mobilisation of violent groups thus controls communal tensions.
- Ensure security during sensitive operations.
- Protect public safety during emergencies.

Legal Framework Governing Internet Shutdowns

1. **Current Legal Framework**

   Internet shutdowns are presently regulated under

   - **Section 20 of the Telecommunications Act, 2023**
   - **Telecommunications (Temporary Suspension of Services) Rules, 2024**

   These provisions have replaced: by

   - **Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885**
   - **Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services Rules, 2017**

2. **Conditions for Ordering an Internet Shutdown**

   Under the Telecommunications Act, 2023, internet services may be suspended only when

   - A **public emergency** exists or it is necessary in the interest of **public safety**.
   - Further safeguards includes-
     - Written reasons must be recorded format.
     - Orders must be issued only by the competent authority.
     - Orders should be published.
     - Shutdowns must be geographically limited.

Challenges in Implementation

Despite legal framework, several concerns remain:

- Some State governments have continued to rely on provisions of the repealed Telegraph Act and the 2017 Rules.
- This practice may bypass the procedural safeguards introduced under the 2024 Rules.
- Lack of uniform implementation across States creates legal uncertainty.
- Transparency in publishing shutdown orders remains inconsistent.

Major Concerns Associated with Internet Shutdowns

1. **Curtailment of Civil Liberties**

   Shutdowns affect:

   - Freedom of speech and expression.
   - Access to information and democratic participation.

2. **Economic Losses**

   Internet suspensions adversely impact:

   - Digital payments and banking services.
   - MSMEs and Start-ups functioning.
   - E-commerce sector will become inactive.

3. **Impact on Education**

   Students face disruption in:

   - Online classes and digital learning will be stopped.
   - Competitive examination conduct will not be possible.

4. **Healthcare Challenges**

   Internet shutdowns affect:

   - Telemedicine, digital health records, emergency medical coordination will be affected.

5. **Governance Issues**

   Government services dependent on digital platforms become inaccessible.

   Examples include:

   - Aadhaar authentication, e-Governance portals will fall nonperforming.

6. **Constitutional issues**

   - Internet shutdowns directly affect several Fundamental Rights like **Article 19(1)(a), Article 19(1)(g)** due to restriction in freedom of speech and expression
   - **Again Article 21 will be affected on the grounds of r**ight to life with dignity, access to healthcare, online education and emergency communication.

Landmark Supreme Court Judgment

Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India (2020)

The Supreme Court laid down important principles governing internet shutdowns.

1. **Internet and Fundamental Rights upholds-**
   - Freedom of speech under Article 19(1)(a), Freedom of trade under Article 19(1)(g).
2. **Principle of Legality**
   - Any shutdown must be authorised by law.

3. **Principle of Necessity**
    - Shutdowns should only be imposed when genuinely required to deal with a public emergency or protect public safety.
4. **Principle of Proportionality**
    - Restrictions should be Appropriate, Least restrictive, Limited to what is necessary
5. **Transparency**
    - Government orders should be published with detailed reasons, making available for judicial scrutiny
6. **Limited Duration**
    - The Court ruled that indefinite internet shutdowns are unconstitutional.
7. **Judicial Review**
    - Citizens may challenge shutdown orders before:
    - High Courts under Article 226
    - Supreme Court under Article 32

India and Internet Shutdowns events

India continues to record one of the highest numbers of internet shutdowns globally.

Recent trends indicate:

- Shutdowns are frequently imposed during protests, communal tensions and law-and-order situations.
- Jammu & Kashmir has recorded the highest number historically.
- Rajasthan and Manipur have also experienced frequent internet suspensions.
- Internet shutdowns remain one of the most debated tools of public-order management.

Way Forward

- Ensure **strict compliance with the Telecommunications Act, 2023** and the **Telecommunications (Temporary Suspension of Services) Rules, 2024**.
- Adopt internet shutdowns only as a **measure of last resort**, after exhausting less restrictive alternatives.
- Strengthen transparency by mandating prompt publication of all suspension orders with detailed reasons.
- Establish periodic independent review mechanisms to assess the necessity and proportionality of shutdowns.
- Promote targeted technological solutions, enhanced cyber monitoring, and effective public communication to maintain public order while safeguarding constitutional freedoms.
- Increase judicial oversight and legislative scrutiny to prevent arbitrary or excessive use of shutdown powers.

Conclusion

Internet shutdowns occupy a sensitive intersection between **national security, public order and constitutional freedoms.** Upholding the rule of law while preserving digital rights is essential for strengthening democratic governance, protecting civil liberties and fostering citizens' trust in public institutions.

***Q.** What do you understand by the concept of "freedom of speech and expression"? Does it cover hate speech also? Why do the films in India stand on a slightly different plane from other forms of expression? Discuss. (15 marks)*

1.1.3. BALANCING PEDESTRIAN RIGHTS AND STREET VENDORS' LIVELIHOOD

Context

Following the Supreme Court's recognition of the Right to Walk on safe, obstruction-free footpaths as a Fundamental Right, Karnataka launched Bengaluru's 'Safe Footpath Drive' to remove encroachments. The drive has raised concerns over compliance with the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, which balances pedestrians' rights with street vendors' livelihoods

Introduction

The debate over reclaiming footpaths reflects the constitutional challenge of balancing **pedestrians' right to safe public spaces** with **street vendors' right to livelihood** under **Article 19(1)(g)**.

Why is Street Vending Essential, Yet a Challenge for Urban Governance?

1. **Right to Livelihood vs Right to Safe Mobility**

   Street vending provides employment to millions in the informal sector and is recognised as a legitimate occupation under **Article 19(1)(g)**. At the same time, citizens have the right to safe, obstruction-free footpaths under **Article 21**, making balanced regulation essential.

2. **Affordable Urban Economy vs Public Space Constraints**

   Street vendors supply affordable goods and services while supporting local economies. However, unregulated vending may obstruct pedestrian movement, emergency access, traffic flow, and universal accessibility.

3. **Inclusive Urbanisation vs Rapid Urban Expansion**

   Indian cities depend on informal livelihoods for economic inclusion, yet increasing urbanisation, population growth, and shrinking public spaces intensify conflicts over the use of footpaths and roads.

4. **Urban Development vs Social Justice**

   Municipal authorities seek to improve urban infrastructure and public convenience, but eviction without due process threatens the livelihoods of economically vulnerable sections and undermines constitutional protections.

Judicial and Legislative Evolution

1. **Sodan Singh v. New Delhi Municipal Committee (1989):** Recognised street vending as a legitimate occupation protected under Article 19(1)(g), subject to reasonable restrictions in the interest of the public.

2. **Maharashtra Ekta Hawkers Union v. Municipal Corporation, Greater Mumbai (2004):** Held that hawkers cannot be arbitrarily evicted, and regulation should balance the right to livelihood with public convenience.
3. **Gainda Ram v. Municipal Corporation of Delhi (2010):** Directed the government to enact a comprehensive law for regulating street vending, laying the foundation for the Street Vendors Act, 2014.
4. **Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014:** Provided a statutory framework for regulating street vending through Town Vending Committees, surveys, Certificates of Vending, and protection against arbitrary eviction, balancing livelihood rights with public interest.
5. **Recent Supreme Court Judgment (2025–26):** Reaffirmed that the Right to Walk on safe, obstruction-free footpaths is an integral part of Article 21, while emphasising that pedestrian rights must be balanced with the statutory safeguards available to street vendors.

Key Features of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014

1. **Balanced Rights-Based Framework**

   The Act balances **pedestrians' right to safe public spaces** with **street vendors' right to livelihood** through regulated vending.
2. **Town Vending Committee (TVC)**

   The Act establishes a **Town Vending Committee (TVC)** with at least **40% vendor representation** to ensure participatory and transparent decision-making.
3. **Mandatory Survey of Street Vendors**

   The TVC must conduct a **survey of all existing vendors** before regulating vending or identifying vending and no-vending zones.
4. **Certificate of Vending**

   Eligible vendors are issued a **Certificate of Vending**, granting legal permission to vend at a specified location without conferring ownership rights over public land.
5. **Protection Against Arbitrary Eviction**

   No street vendor can be **evicted or relocated before completion of the survey and issuance of Certificates of Vending**, ensuring due process under the law.

Challenges Persisting Despite the Street Vendors Act, 2014

1. **Weak Institutional Implementation:** Many cities have **not constituted functional Town Vending Committees (TVCs)** or conducted regular vendor surveys, resulting in poor implementation of the Act.
2. **Inadequate Urban Planning:** The absence of **scientifically demarcated vending zones** and the exclusion of street vending from city master plans continue to create conflicts over public spaces.
3. **Arbitrary Evictions and Poor Governance:** Anti-encroachment drives are often carried out **without following the due process** prescribed under the Act, reflecting weak institutional coordination and enforcement.

4. **Livelihood Insecurity:** Millions of street vendors remain vulnerable to **frequent eviction, income loss, and lack of social security**, despite statutory protection.
5. **Legal and Awareness Deficit:** Limited awareness of the Act among vendors and local authorities, coupled with the tension between **urban beautification and livelihood rights**, undermines effective implementation.

Way Forward for Inclusive Urban Footpath Management

1. **Strengthen Institutional Mechanisms:** Constitute functional **Town Vending Committees (TVCs)** in every city to ensure participatory, transparent, and accountable regulation of street vending.
2. **Scientific Survey and Spatial Planning:** Conduct periodic **GIS-based vendor surveys** and scientifically demarcate vending, restricted, and no-vending zones based on pedestrian and traffic needs.
3. **Ensure Rule of Law and Due Process:** Implement the **Street Vendors Act, 2014** in letter and spirit by completing surveys, issuing Certificates of Vending, and following due process before eviction or relocation.
4. **Integrate Street Vending into Urban Planning:** Incorporate designated vending spaces into **master plans, Smart Cities Mission, and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)** to promote inclusive and accessible public spaces.
5. **Leverage Technology for Better Governance:** Adopt **digital Certificates of Vending, GIS mapping, QR-based identification, and online grievance portals** to improve transparency, monitoring, and service delivery.
6. **Strengthen Social Protection and Capacity Building:** Provide vendors with access to **social security, financial inclusion, skill development, and awareness of legal rights** to enhance livelihood resilience.
7. **Promote Rights-Based and Inclusive Urban Governance:** Balance **pedestrians' right to safe public spaces** with **vendors' right to livelihood** through participatory decision-making and people-centric urban governance.

Conclusion

The **Street Vendors Act, 2014** upholds the constitutional balance between **safe public spaces and livelihood security**. Sustainable urban governance requires **rule-based regulation, inclusive planning, and due process**, ensuring that cities are both **accessible and equitable**.

Q. *The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 seeks to balance livelihood security with public interest. Discuss the challenges in its implementation and suggest measures for inclusive urban governance. 15 Marks*

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2.1. ECONOMY

2.1.1. BALANCING FINANCIAL INNOVATION WITH INVESTOR PROTECTION

Why is in news

- India's F&O market is now among the world's largest, but the rapid surge in speculative retail trading—overshadowing its core utility for hedging and price discovery—has become a major regulatory concern.

What is a Futures & Options (F&O) Market?

The F&O market is a segment of the derivatives market where contracts derive their value from an underlying asset such as:

- Equity shares
- Stock indices (Nifty, Sensex)
- Commodities
- Currency
- Interest rates

Primary Objectives

- **Risk Hedging:** Protect against adverse price movements.
- **Price Discovery:** Reflect future market expectations.
- **Liquidity Enhancement:** Facilitate smooth trading.
- **Portfolio Management:** Reduce investment risk.

What is a Futures & Options (F&O) Market?

- A **Futures Market** is an organized exchange where standardized futures contracts are traded, allowing participants to lock in the future price of an asset today.
- The underlying asset can be **Stocks**, **Stock indices** (Nifty, Sensex), Gold, Crude oil, Agricultural commodities, Bonds etc.
- The Option Market is a marketplace where investors buy and sell the right to trade an asset in the future without being legally bound to do so.

Primary Objectives of F&O market

- **Risk Hedging:** Protect against adverse price movements.
- **Price Discovery:** Reflect future market expectations.
- **Liquidity Enhancement:** Facilitate smooth trading.
- **Portfolio Management:** Reduce investment risk.

Why has India's F&O Market Expanded Rapidly?

The extraordinary growth of the derivatives market is driven by several structural and technological factors:

1. **Financial inclusivity through digitalisation**
    - Smartphone penetration and affordable internet led acess to financial trading sector

- UPI-based instant fund transfers made trading hassle free such developments have significantly lowered entry barriers.

2. **Rise of Discount Brokerages**

   Low-cost trading platforms have encouraged frequent trading by reducing transaction costs and simplifying account opening.

3. **Weekly Expiry Contracts**

   Introduction of weekly expiry options dramatically increased trading opportunities, encouraging speculative rather than investment-oriented behaviour.

4. **Social Media and Finfluencers**
   - "Get rich quick" narratives, Intraday trading tutorials have acted as motivation to step in trading.
   - Telegram/WhatsApp trading groups, Influencer-led stock recommendations have created unrealistic expectations among inexperienced investors.

5. **Behavioural Psychology**
   - A prolonged bull market generated Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) among traders in financial market.
   - Overconfidence, herd mentality has promoted gambling behaviour.

Major Challenges in F&O market are

1. **Excessive Retail Speculation**
   - One of the biggest concerns is the increasing participation of retail investors with **limited financial knowledge**.Over **90% of retail traders suffered losses**.
   - Resulting household savings shift from productive investments to speculative bets.

2. **Information and Technology Asymmetry**
   - The F&O market is dominated by institutional investors, hedge funds, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs), proprietary trading firms. As a result retail investors lack comparable resources, resulting in an uneven competitive landscape.

3. **Algorithmic Trading (Algo Trading)**
   - Algorithmic trading executes trades within milliseconds. According to SEBI,**97% of institutional profits** are generated through algorithmic trading.
   - **Challenges** creates unfair market advantages raises concerns regarding market integrity and fairness.

4. **High Transaction Costs**
   - Retail investors often underestimate the cumulative impact of Brokerage charges, Securities Transaction Tax (STT), GST, Exchange transaction fees, Stamp duty.

5. **Financial Illiteracy**
   - Most retail investors lack understanding of Leverage, Margin requirements, Option Greeks (Delta, Gamma, Theta, Vega), Implied volatility, Time decay etc
   - Consequently, many treat derivatives as a form of gambling rather than risk-management instruments.

6. **Rising Household Financial Vulnerability**
   - Persistent trading losses have wider macroeconomic consequences decline in household savings, Increase in unsecured borrowing, Reduced consumption, Lower investment in productive assets.
   - This weakens India's long-term capital formation.

Way Forward

1. **Mandatory Suitability Assessment**
   - Introduction of a **risk-based eligibility framework** before granting access to derivatives trading.
   - **Measures includes** Knowledge tests, Risk profiling, Minimum financial capability assessment.
2. **Strengthen Financial Literacy**
   - Expand SEBI's Investor Awareness Programmes by integrating financial education into school curriculum, universities, digital platforms, skill development initiatives
   - This aligns with the National Strategy for Financial Education.
3. **Greater Accountability of Brokers**
   - Brokerages should be legally required to assess investor suitability, verify financial capacity, prevent inexperienced investors from accessing complex derivative products.
4. **Regulate Finfluencers**
   - SEBI should sensitise finfluencers through mandate registration of financial influencers, enforce disclosure of conflicts of interest, penalise misleading investment advice.
5. **Promote Long-Term Investing**
   - Encourage participation in Mutual Funds, SIPs, ETFs, Direct equity investing based on fundamentals through tax incentives and awareness campaigns.
6. **Strengthen Coordination Among Regulators**
   - Enhance collaboration between SEBI, RBI, Ministry of Finance,Stock Exchanges to monitor systemic risks and safeguard financial stability.

Conclusion

- While India's leadership in derivatives reflects financial sophistication, surging retail speculation exposes critical regulatory and awareness gaps. Policymakers must balance innovation with robust investor protection to ensure capital markets drive informed wealth creation for Viksit Bharat 2047, rather than speculative excess.

Q. *Derivatives are designed as instruments for risk management, yet they have increasingly become vehicles of speculation. Discuss this statement in the context of India's Futures and Options (F&O) market. Suggest a balanced regulatory framework for sustainable capital market development. (15 Marks, 250 Words)*

2.1.2. INDIA'S EMPLOYMENT PARADOX: STRUCTURAL SHOCKS AND THE GENDER GAP

Context

Rising youth unemployment and a collapse in non-farm jobs have forced a distress-driven return to agricultural employment, threatening India's economic stability and its 'Viksit Bharat' ambitions.

Introduction

To sustain 8%-9% GDP growth, India must drastically improve its formal Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR), which remains below 30%. Transitioning the female workforce from distress-driven agricultural labor to formal, remunerative employment is critical for national productivity.

What are the Trends in Female Labour Force Participation in India (FLFPR)?

1. **Recent FLFPR Surge**
    - According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023-24, FLFPR rose to 41.7%, recovering from a low of 23.3% in 2017-18.
    - This metric masks underlying distress, as the rise is predominantly driven by rural women engaging in unpaid or non-remunerative work.
2. **Return to Agriculture**
    - Contrary to expectations of structural transformation, the share of rural women in agriculture increased to 76.9% in 2023-24.
    - This reflects a reverse structural shift as women are compelled to return to subsistence farming due to limited non-farm opportunities.
3. **Rise in Unpaid and Self-Employment**
    - Much of the recent increase represents a shift from domestic duties to unpaid family labour or low-paid self-employment.
    - This indicates that the rise in participation reflects economic distress and inflation survival rather than genuine economic empowerment.

Significance of Increasing Female Worker Population Ratio (WPR)

1. **GDP Expansion**
    - A 10-percentage-point increase in India's female WPR could augment the overall GDP growth rate by nearly two percentage points.
    - Integrating women expands the total labor supply, directly amplifying the nation's aggregate economic capacity.
2. **Multiplier Effect on Demand**
    - When women enter paid employment, household incomes rise, which directly boosts domestic savings and aggregate consumption.
3. **Human Capital Development**

- Increased maternal earnings directly translate into better nutrition, healthcare, and educational outcomes for children.

4. **Workplace Innovation & Competitiveness**
    - Cross-country evidence confirms that gender-diverse work environments inherently drive higher efficiency, creativity, and global competitiveness.

Challenges Undermining Female Labour Market Outcomes

1. **Jobless Capital-Intensive Growth**
    - Recent economic expansion is concentrated in capital-heavy sectors (e.g., IT and finance) that fail to absorb large cohorts of the workforce.
    - Labor-intensive sectors like textiles and small-scale manufacturing witnessed an absolute decline in employment between 2013 and 2019.
2. **The 'Double Burden' of Care Work**
    - Women disproportionately bear the burden of unpaid domestic and care work (contributing an invisible 3.1% to GDP).
    - This severe time poverty restricts their ability to enter or sustain formal market employment.
3. **Pervasive Informality**
    - Over 90% of employed women are trapped in the informal sector, leaving them devoid of social security or basic legal safeguards.
4. **Rising 'NEET' Population**
    - Despite achieving gender parity in secondary education, the number of young women (aged 15-29) Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) skyrocketed to over 100 million by 2018.
5. **North-South Employment Divide**
    - States like Tamil Nadu account for over 40% of India's female factory workers due to robust infrastructure and literacy.
    - Conversely, Hindi-belt states lag significantly, with Bihar recording a dismal female WPR of just 15%.

Way Forward

1. **Promote Labor-Intensive Manufacturing**
    - Realign national schemes like the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) to aggressively support female-centric, labor-intensive sectors such as textiles, footwear, and food processing.
2. **Invest in Social Infrastructure**
    - State governments must develop robust community childcare centers, elderly care services, and secure working women's hostels to alleviate the double burden of domestic duties.
3. **Redesign Employment Metrics**
    - Modernize National Statistical Office (NSO) surveys by incorporating robust Time Use Surveys to accurately capture and economically value women's unpaid care work.

4. **Replicate the Southern Industrial Model**
    - Northern states must invest heavily in non-insurance-based public health and universal female education to mirror Tamil Nadu's success in industrial female workforce integration.
5. **Empower and Formalize the Self-Employed**
    - Strengthen Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by seamlessly linking them with formal credit institutions, digital financial literacy programs, and e-commerce platforms.
6. **Targeted Skill Development**
    - Launch region-specific vocational training tailored to emerging sectors like healthcare, logistics, and digital services to make the transition away from agriculture viable.

Conclusion

The recent statistical rise in FLFPR masks deep economic distress rather than reflecting true structural empowerment. Creating formal, high-quality jobs for women is an urgent policy imperative to harness India's demographic dividend and achieve true economic parity.

Q. *Examine the causes of India's fluctuating Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) and suggest measures to ensure qualitative economic inclusion. (10 Marks)*

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