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Mains Practice Questions

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Q. India's women who are enrolled in education and employment are far less than their counterparts. Examine the reasons and probable solutions for this gap in India. (250 words)

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Approach

- Give an estimate of gender gap in India in education and employment
- Discuss the reasons for this gender gap
- Suggest measures that need to be taken

Introduction:

- 2011 census showed the male literacy rate to be 82.14% while for females it lags behind at 65.46%. Estimates show that for every 100 girls in rural India only a single one reaches class 12 and almost 40% of girls leave school even before reaching the fifth standard.
- A mere 2.5 per cent of the Central Government's 1.87 million employees are women. In 2017, a study by Monster Salary Index (MSI) showed the overall gender pay gap in India was 20 percent.

Body:

Reasons for this gap

- **Quality of education and infrastructure:** Within government schools- overcrowded classrooms, absent teacher, unsanitary conditions, absence of girl's toilet are common complaints and can cause parents to decide that it is not worth their girl child going to school.
- **Social factors:** Early marriages as per their social custom, girl children are not allowed to go outside the house and village because it is a social taboo, parents go to their workplaces and household activities are undertaken by the young female children, caring of younger ones at home, gender disparity at home, in society and earlier marriages in this region.
- **Health factors:** frequent ill-health of the student especially female due to lack of nutritious food and unhygienic conditions in living areas.
- **Economic factors:** Due to difficult financial conditions and social conditioning, families usually neglect girl education because which they are not employment ready.
- **Patriarchy and social Perceptions:** Position of women in the social, political and economic system, is very low. They are noticeably absent from the discussions of development theory too. This leads to absence of a dominant voice for assertion of their needs and rights as a citizen.
- **Violence** against women and security issues is yet another reason.

Solution

- **Mandatory Education** for girl child and retaining them in higher education. Providing proper infrastructure such as separate female toilets.
- **Skill development:** Provide them with job-relevant skills that employers actually demand, or that they can use in launching their own business.
- **Security and safety:** strong enforcement of laws and increased policing can help in this regard.
- **Health:** Strengthening of Anganawadi, Balawadies and frequent visit of health personnel is necessary to motivate them.
- Can take the help of Mahila Mandals in empowering the females of the country.
- Raise aspirations of girls and their parents: We need to give girls images and role models that expand their dreams
- **Women Representation:** Increase participation of women in local, regional and national legislation as it can raise their say in policy making.

Conclusion

- For years, women's issues have been viewed as a "social welfare" problem to be treated with appendage solutions. Statistics, however, reveal that such a distorted perspective will cost the nation dearly.
- India's shocking gender gap in the labour force makes us much poorer as a nation, both economically and socially. With India poised to become a \$10 trillion economy by 2030, it cannot afford to leave half of its population behind.