



Mains Practice Questions

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Q. Social changes in society cannot be brought only on the edifice of legislations. Analyze. (150 words)

14 Mar, 2019 GS Paper 1 Indian Society

Approach

- Write about the Social Change and need of legislation for social change.
- Give some examples and utility of legislation in bringing social change in the society.
- Elaborate other ways to bring social change

Introduction

- Social change refers to any modification in established patterns of social structure, inter-human relationship and standards of conduct. These can be generated from within society (changing economy, technology) or due to external interventions and influences (legislation, judicial pronouncements, influence of other cultures etc).
- In modern societies legislative action tends to be most important instrument delivering social change, but that may sometime not be sufficient to bring long lasting change and may at times come in direct conflict with the established norms.

Body

Social change in the society through legislation:-

- **Pre-independence legislations:** The British rule in India for the first time established the supreme authority of law in social matters, ensuring uniformity in law and social order which India did not have till then. Many of the evil practices such as sati pratha, child marriage etc. were curtailed by timely and suitable legislations.
- **Increased status of the women:** Legislation helped to shelve many of our outmoded traditional customs and practices. For instance law has been instrumental in bringing about a change in the status of women.
 - In matters of employment, a woman is entitled for equal pay as her male counterparts.
 - Workplaces have been made safer through **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace(Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.**
 - A daughter can be given and taken in adoption under the **Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act 1956.**

Education for all: Education has been made accessible and mandatory for all irrespective of gender, status, religion or caste through Right to Education.

However, in some instances legislation has failed to bring about the needed social change. For instance, problem of untouchability, child marriages, female foeticide, honour killings are still rampant despite legislations. Sometimes legislative actions come in direct conflict with societal norms thereby defeating the efforts. For ex: Effort towards Uniform Civil Code. Hence, more efforts in other dimensions are needed to ensure sustainable and smooth social change.

Other steps to bring social change:-

- **Social work and empowerment of people:** Since social work aims at resolving problems and issues related to structural inequalities, mass poverty, socio-economic injustices and deprivation, it promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being.
- **Judicial activism:** Legislatures are not best fitted for the role of adapting the law to the necessities of the time, for the legislative process is too slow and the legislatures often divided by politics, slowed down by periodic elections and overburdened with myriad other legislative activities. Judicial interventions can be a better alternative.
- **Social reform movements:** The social change can be brought by preaching of religions, by launching social reform movements like one done by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Sarswati, Justice Ranade, Shahu Maharaj, Jotiba Phule, Gandhiji, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and other such prominent social thinkers.
- **Participatory decision making is needed:** Administrative solutions are often unsatisfactory to absolutists who have little respect for the pragmatic balancing of interests. Any step for social change should come from within the society so that it is practical in implementation.
- **Education:** Education is the most powerful factor of social change and social changes to a great extent can be brought about through the process of education
- **Acceptance by high status individuals:** Any change would become easily accepted in the society if the people who are in high position would accept the change.
- **New opinions and thoughts:** Another factor of social change is the appearance of new opinions and thoughts. For example changes in the attitudes towards dowry, caste system, female education, etc. have resulted in widespread social variations and modifications. In fact, a majority of the social revolutions take place as a result of the evolution of new ways of thinking.
- **Technological and scientific factors:** Technological and scientific inventions such as various types of machines and equipments etc. are potent factors in social change. They break regional barriers by providing easy and fast means of communication as well as of conveyance.

Conclusion

The social change brought by holistic approach is more sustainable and acceptable to all sections of the society.