



Mains Practice Question

Q. A focus on improving the condition of women of India can immensely contribute to poverty alleviation. Discuss. (250 words)

16 Sep, 2019 GS Paper 1 Indian Society

Approach

- Introduce the answer by giving their share in total population or any other report.
- Highlight the link between poverty alleviation and women empowerment.
- Mention any global report or data for value addition
- Give an optimistic way forward.

Introduction

- Women constitute **almost half** of the country's population, therefore improving their condition in the country can immensely contribute to poverty alleviation. Women's empowerment plays a catalytic role towards achievement of transformational economic, political and social changes required for sustainable development.
- Many reports and studies suggests that womens' typically spend their income on food and healthcare for children, which is in sharp contrast to men, who spend a higher proportion of their income for personal needs.

Body

Improvement in Women's Conditions and Poverty Alleviation

- **Social:**
 - **Health:** Improvement in the health indicators of women can significantly contribute to overall health of family and the new borns. Since the significant amount of earnings of underprivileged are spent on medical treatment, improved women's health and their newborns can drastically reduced household expenditure.
 - **Education** is the major tool for eliminating poverty. Educated women are more sensitive toward their children's education and contribute more to their development.
- **Economic**
 - **Agriculture:** **FAO** estimates that if women farmers had the same access to tools and credit as men, agricultural output in 34 developing countries would rise by an estimated average of up to 4%, translating to up to 150 million fewer hungry people.
 - **Equal Wages:** Wage disparity between men and women has serious implication on poverty. Equal wages for females would ensure increased household income and productive expenditure on health and nutrition of the whole family.
 - **Skill Development:** Women are significantly involved in collecting minor forest produce and household based industries. Enhancing their skills can directly reduce their economic dependence on their husbands, which in-turn will increase their decision making power in productive expenditure and family matters.

- **Political:** A society where the female voice is sought and heard, where the principles of equity (fairness) and equality (opportunity) co-exist, is a more powerful and effective society.
 - Increasing due representation of women in decision making at grassroots level can effectively help better targeting government poverty alleviation programs.

Conclusion

Poverty and empowerment issues cannot be adequately addressed where only half of the population is positively and actively engaged, therefore actively engaging women as the driver for bringing positive change and eliminating poverty from the country is the key to focus on. However, the government in its recent social sector program has effectively engaged the women centric efforts like rural sanitation through Swachh Bharat, improving health outcomes through **POSHAN Abhiyan** and **UJJWALA Scheme** etc. A lot is required to be done to achieve zero hunger and poverty alleviation in the country.

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