



Mains Practice Question

Q. Evaluate the present state of Indian society with regard to issues such as poverty, illiteracy, and exploitation. Are we really moving towards being a developed country? (250 words)

30 Jan, 2023 GS Paper 1 Indian Society

Approach

- Start your answer by briefly discussing the present state of Indian society on issues like poverty, illiteracy and exploitation.
- Discuss whether it can consider as developed country and suggest some measures to improve it.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

- The Indian society has a complex structure that has evolved over time, with a mix of traditional and modern elements. Despite the country's rapid economic growth, issues like poverty, illiteracy, and exploitation still persist in the society.

Body

▪ Issues faced by Indian Society:

◦ Poverty:

- Despite recent economic growth, poverty remains a significant challenge, with **16.4% of the population living in poverty and 4.2% considered extremely poor**.
- The proportion of employed population below \$1.90 purchasing power parity per day in 2021 was 7.6%.
- In 2016, 49.3% of the population was considered to be multidimensionally poor, with 23.6% of the multidimensionally poor and deprived population.

◦ Illiteracy:

- The country has made significant progress in increasing literacy rates, but there are still disparities between different regions and demographic groups.
 - For example, some states have literacy rates higher than 90%, while others, such as Jharkhand and Bihar, still have low literacy rates.

◦ Exploitation:

- It is another major problem in the Indian society, particularly in the form of discrimination and marginalization of certain groups, such as women, Dalits, and Adivasis.

◦ Socio-cultural issues:

- The Indian society has also been facing socio-cultural issues that need to be addressed, such as security of people, particularly of the vulnerable sections, social reforms, and tackling socio-cultural issues.

▪ Related Government Initiatives:

- In terms of government initiatives, there have been various schemes and programs aimed at addressing poverty, illiteracy, and exploitation in India.
 - **Poverty alleviation:** The government has implemented various initiatives aimed

at alleviating poverty, such as the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** and the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)**, which aim to provide employment opportunities and food security to the poor.

- **Literacy improvement:** The government has taken several initiatives to improve the literacy rate, such as the **National Literacy Mission** and the **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**, which aim to provide universal education to all citizens.
- **Combating exploitation:** The government has implemented various laws and policies aimed at combating exploitation, such as the **Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act** and the **Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act**, which aim to prohibit and regulate child labor and bonded labor, respectively.

▪ **Developed country status:**

- In terms of being considered as a developed country, it can be argued that India is still facing many challenges and has a long way to go. While it has made significant progress in some areas such as the economy and technology, poverty, illiteracy, and exploitation continue to be widespread issues that need to be addressed.
- To improve the situation, measures such as investing in education and healthcare, implementing effective anti-poverty programs, and increasing measures to combat child labour and exploitation are crucial.
- In addition, addressing deep-seated social issues such as the caste system, gendered violence, and communalism will also be important in creating a more inclusive and equitable society.
- **Suggestions to improve the issues of poverty, illiteracy and exploitation:**
 - Addressing the gender pay gap and increasing access to economic resources and opportunities for women, as they make up a significant portion of the agricultural workforce yet own a small portion of agricultural land.
 - Improving access to basic necessities like food, clean water, and healthcare.
 - Encouraging small business growth and job creation in underserved communities.
- **To resolve illiteracy in Indian society:**
 - Providing access to quality education for all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic background.
 - Implementing adult literacy programs for those who did not have the opportunity to attend school.
 - Encouraging a culture of learning and making education a priority in communities.
- **To address exploitation in Indian society:**
 - Strengthening laws and enforcement against exploitative practices such as human trafficking, forced labor, and wage theft.
 - Improving labor standards and working conditions through policies and regulations.
 - Encouraging community and government collaboration to identify and address exploitation.

Conclusion

India still faces significant challenges in poverty, illiteracy, and exploitation, but government initiatives and proposed measures can help to address these issues. By investing in education and healthcare, implementing anti-poverty programs, and combating exploitation, India can work towards becoming a more inclusive and equitable society.