Society & Social Justice · GS - I

What are the continued challenges for women in India against time and space?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2019	GS - I	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Patriarchy; gender-based violence; unpaid care work; education; employment; political representation; intersectionality; rural–urban differences; digital divide; changing social norms; legal protection; gender equality

Model Answer

Introduction

Despite constitutional guarantees, educational progress and legal reforms, women in India continue to face inequalities across generations and geographical settings. Their experiences differ by caste, class, religion, disability, age and location, demonstrating that gender inequality is both persistent and context-dependent.

Continued Challenges

1. Patriarchal Social Norms

Son preference, restrictions on mobility, early marriage and unequal household decision-making continue to limit women's autonomy in some communities.

2. Education and Employment

Although educational access has improved, barriers remain in higher education, technical training and employment. Safety concerns, discriminatory recruitment and unequal access to professional networks restrict opportunities.

3. Unpaid Care Work

Women disproportionately undertake domestic labour, childcare and eldercare. This limits their time for paid employment, skill development and public participation.

4. Violence and Safety

Domestic violence, sexual harassment, trafficking and online abuse threaten women's dignity and freedom. Fear of violence can restrict mobility, education and employment choices.

5. Regional and Spatial Inequalities

Rural women may face inadequate transport, healthcare and employment opportunities, while urban women encounter unsafe commuting, housing constraints and workplace discrimination. Women in conflict-affected, remote and disaster-prone regions face additional barriers.

6. Intersectional Disadvantages

Women from marginalised caste groups, tribal communities, poor households and minority communities may experience overlapping forms of discrimination. Disability can create further barriers to education, mobility and public services.

7. Digital and Political Exclusion

Unequal access to devices, digital skills and political decision-making limits women's influence over economic and public institutions.

Way Forward

Accessible education, safe transport, affordable childcare, equal employment opportunities, effective legal enforcement and stronger political representation are essential. Gender-sensitive planning must account for regional differences and social disadvantage.

Conclusion

Women's challenges persist because legal equality has not fully translated into social and economic equality. Transformative progress requires changing social norms, redistributing care responsibilities and ensuring that every woman can exercise autonomy, safety and equal citizenship across time and space.

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