

AIR Discussions (December 4th Week)

AIR SPOTLIGHT: EMPOWERING WOMEN, EMPOWERING NATION

Background:

- Quoting Swami Vivekananda's saying that the idea of a perfect womanhood was perfect independence, PM said the dream of New India was where the women were empowered.
- In charting new growth story India is transitioning from women's development to 'women-led development'.
- In this grand vision, women have been reimagined as architects of India's progress and development, rather than being passive recipients of the fruits of development.
- The achievement of the targets under SDG 5: 'Gender Equality' also facilitates the realization of other SDGs, thus, ensuring multi-pronged holistic development.

Approaches to Women Inclusive Development in India:

- From first to fifth five year plan **welfarism based approach** was followed. It involved protective patronage.
- From 6th five year plan **gender inclusive development** was emphasized. For first time, entire chapter focused on women was incorporated (Women and Development).
- 9th five year plan adopted **women empowerment as national development policy goal**.
- 11th five year plan is considered as the watershed Plan as far as women inclusive development is concerned. It introduced two major concepts:
 1. **Women governance:** gender justice, gender equality, gender budgeting, gender sensitivity.
 2. Life cycle approach: physical security, social security, economic security, political empowerment, community security.

Examples highlighting the developments in the area of Women Empowerment are:

- The **first female fighter pilots have been appointed** in the Indian Air Force.
- India's **successful launch of the Mangalyaan and 104 Nano satellites on-board a single rocket had a team of women scientist behind them.**
- India has been successful in achieving gender parity in school education. The **literacy rate of women has risen from a mere 9 per cent in 1951 to 65 per cent in 2011.**
- Today, **every fourth worker in India is a woman.**
- **One third of all certified engineers are now women and over three fourths of all health workers at primary level are women.**
- In a country bursting with entrepreneurial spirit, today almost **every fifth entrepreneur is a woman.**
- Elected women representatives now **make up about 46 percent of panchayat members.**
- In the 1957 elections only 45 women had contested general elections, in the 2014 election, **668 women candidates contested.**
- The **average life expectancy of women has risen** from 31.7 years in 1950-51 to about 70 years in 2016.
- **Institutional births have risen to an all-time high** of 79 per cent in 2014-15.
- The **maternal mortality rate has dropped** by half in the decade between 2001-03 and 2011-13.
- The **number of women with a bank or savings account, which they operate themselves, has increased** from just 15 percent in 2005-06 to 53 per cent in 2015-16.
- As highlighted in the Economic Survey 2018, **out of 17 indicators pertaining to women's agency, attitudes and outcomes, 14 have improved over time.**

Other side of the coin:

- India has **fallen 28 places in the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report 2021**. India is now ranked 140 among 156 countries.
- **Population**
 - In 2011, the sex ratio was 943 and the same for rural and urban areas was 949 and 929.
 - Sex ratio in the age group 0 - 6 years declined in urban area.
 - As per National Sample Survey (2011), only 11.5% households in rural areas and 12.4 % households in urban areas are female headed households.
- **Health**
 - Health and Survival index: India has fared the worst, ranking at 155.
 - China and India together account for about 90 to 95% of the missing female births annually.
- **Literacy And Education**
 - As per NSS 75th Round, only 8.3% of the females of age 15 years & above by highest level of education have successfully completed graduation and above level of courses.
 - As per NSS 75th Round, only 3.1 % females are pursuing technical/professional courses.
 - In the index of education attainment, India has been ranked at 114.
- **Participation In Economy**
 - As per Global Gender Gap Report 2021, economic participation gender gap actually widened in India by 3% this year.
 - The earned income of women in India is only one-fifth of men's.
 - Only 8.9% of firms have women in top management positions
- **Participation In Decision Making**
 - India has declined on the political empowerment index by 13.5 percentage points, and a decline in the number of women ministers, from 23.1% in 2019 to 9.1% in 2021.
 - In the 17th Lok Sabha, only 14% of the total members are women.
 - Women participation in the State Assemblies was 11% against the total elected representatives.
 - Only 9% of judges in Supreme Court are females.
 - Percentage of Female Police Officers in India is a meagre 7.02.
 - 108th Constitutional Amendment has still not seen light of the day.
- **Social Obstacles In Women's Empowerment**
 - Crimes against women increased 7.3 per cent from 2018 to 2019

RIFT WIDENS

Highlights of report

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ According to WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, India has closed 62.5% of its gender gap till date ▶ India's gender gap on economic participation and opportunity sub-index widened by 3% this year ▶ Highest decline on political empowerment sub-index, where India regressed 13.5 percentage points ▶ Women's labour force participation rate fell from 24.8% to 22.3% ▶ Estimated earned income of women is only one-fifth | <p>of men's, which puts India among the bottom 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ India ranks among bottom five in discrimination against women in health and survival sub-index ▶ As Covid-19 impact continues to be felt, global gender gap has increased by a generation from 99.5 to 135.6 years ▶ Iceland is the most gender-equal nation for the 12th time in 15 years ▶ Top 10 gender-equal countries include Finland, Norway, New Zealand, Rwanda, Sweden, Ireland and Switzerland |
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Steps taken by the government:

- **Financial Empowerment**
 - Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Programme and Sukanya Samridhi Yojana

- PM Jan Dhan Yojana
- **Encouraging Entrepreneurship**
 - Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana,
 - Self Help Groups (SHGs) have been promoted under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM).
 - Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna
 - Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) scheme
 - E-haats
- **Empowering Motherhood, Health**
 - The Maternity Benefit Act has been amended to extend the period of mandatory paid maternity leave for working women to 26 weeks.
 - PM Matru Vandana Yojana.
 - PM Ayushman Bharat and Health & Wellness Centres
 - Swatch Bharat Mission
 - POSHAN Abhiyaan
- **Women Safety**
 - Strict implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.
 - Women Helplines and One Stop Centres
 - 33 per cent reservation for women in the police force is also being implemented.
 - Nirbhaya Fund
 - Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020
 - Ujjawala Scheme
- **Accessing the Inaccessible**
 - Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme.

Why women empowerment is needed?

- Because it means emancipation of women from the vicious grips of social, economical, political, caste and gender-based discrimination.
- It means granting women the freedom to make life choices.
- Women empowerment does not mean 'deifying women' rather it means replacing patriarchy with parity.
- **Human Rights or Individual Rights:** A woman is a being with senses, imagination and thoughts; she should be able to express them freely.
- **Social Women Empowerment:** Gender equality implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life.
- **Educational Empowerment:** It means empowering women with the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process.
- **Economic and occupational empowerment:** It implies a better quality of material life through sustainable livelihoods owned and managed by women.
- **Legal empowerment:** It means addressing the gaps between what the law prescribes and what actually occurs.
- **Political Women Empowerment:** It means the existence of a political system favoring the participation in and control by the women of the political decision-making process and in governance.

Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest sons of India, quoted that,

“There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved, It is not possible for a bird to fly only one wing.”

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, quoted that,

“To awaken the people, it is the women who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves”.

Way forward

- **Ensure gender-sensitive thinking for legislation and policies keeping in view the challenges faced by women including**
 - different life stages (single women, married women, young mothers and women re-entering the workforce after a break).
 - levels of education (illiterate, school educated, vocationally trained, college graduates, professionals).
 - geographic inequities (rural, urban, towns, peri-urban areas, remote locations) and marginalization (SC/ST, OBCs etc.).
 - special need groups such as single mothers, widows, homeless women and women with disabilities, among others.
- **Strengthen legal frameworks to eliminate discrimination against women and promote gender equity**
 - Craft legislations for women engaged in the unorganized sector
 - Ensure mechanisms for implementation of mandatory laws
 - Create liberal laws/guidelines that encourage women to re-enter the workforce after a break.
 - Develop and implement Equal Opportunity Policies
 - Reward villages/districts with an equal child sex ratio through information, education, and communication (IEC) campaigns.
- **Generate gender-disaggregated data and rank states on key indicators**
 - Establish a dedicated unit within the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
 - Rank states on a set of reliable and comparable indicators that reflect changes in the status of women at the national and sub-national levels over time.
- **Encourage women’s participation in industry and enterprise**
 - Develop sector/industry specific targets for women’s employment and incentivize their implementation by firms.
 - Create policies and guidelines, on priority, to enhance access to credit by women entrepreneurs; provide facilitated credit access pathways for special women.
 - Consider incentivizing sectors/companies that have over 30 per cent women workers by providing tax benefits.
- **Improve asset ownership and economic security**
 - Prioritize groups of women farmers seeking to lease land, water bodies, etc., at the village panchayat level.
 - Encourage joint registration with spouses/ sole registration of land in the name of the woman
 - Recognize and secure women’s rights over common property resources like irrigation systems, fishing grounds, forests and water.
- **Create enabling conditions for women engaged in agriculture**
 - Ensure 50 per cent membership of women farmers in Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).
 - Consider creating a separate budget to bear the registration/processing fee for the registration of women FPOs.
 - Specially focus on skill development among women
 - Target agricultural extension services to women farmers as well, not just males.
- **Enhance women’s skills and leveraging ability**
 - Consider extending the Post Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Girl Child scheme to families with two girl children.
 - Provide relatively higher financial incentives for girls’ education until Class XII.
 - Promote skill development among women in non-traditional work such as electronic technicians, electricians, plumbers, taxi drivers etc.
 - Organize women into professional groups/ guilds to improve their bargaining power.
- **Ensure mobility, security and safety for all women**
 - Provide affordable housing, residential hostels and gender friendly facilities in upcoming towns and big cities.
 - Improve rural connectivity and public transport systems.

- Ensure gender-sensitive, rights-based and time-bound trials as well as disposal of cases pertaining to violence against women.
- Strengthen the standard operating protocols for tackling crimes against women, including new forms of violence such as cybercrimes.
- Introduce training (including refresher training) on women-specific issues.

Women-led development is indeed the future for India, a nation that is civilisationally attuned to the idea of nari shakti - and the future of women-led development is going to be immensely enriching and more sustainable than the past world led predominantly by men.

https://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/Strategy_for_New_India.pdf

https://www.worldwidejournals.com/global-journal-for-research-analysis-GJRA/special_issues_pdf/September_2017_1507115716_61.pdf

<https://www.investindia.gov.in/team-india-blogs/understanding-prime-minister-narendra-modis-women-led-development-model>

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/opinions/2021/mar/08/why-women-led-development-is-indias-future-2273719.html>

<https://transformingindia.mygov.in/women-led-development/>

Pralay Missile

- The first flight test of indigenously developed surface to surface missile 'Pralay' has been conducted by DRDO from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha.
- The missile is powered with a **solid propellant rocket motor with a range of 150 – 500 kilometres.**
- Pralay is a **next-generation short-range ballistic missile with a carrying capacity of a 1-tonne warhead.**
- It can be launched from a mobile launcher.
- The missile guidance system is provided with the latest navigation system and integrated avionics.
- This weapon is **based on the Prithvi Defence Vehicle which is a part of the Indian Ballistic Missile Defence Program.**
- The missile met all the objectives with greater accuracy.
- The **payload capacity is 500 – 1000 kg.**

<https://newsonair.gov.in/News?title=DRDO-conducts-maiden-flight-test-of-indigenously-developed-surface-to-surface-missile--Pralay%2C-off-the-coast-of-Odisha&id=432017>

MSP for Copra

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister has approved the minimum support price for copra for 2022.
- The Fair Average Quality of milling copra has been increased to Rs 10,590/quintal for 2022 along with the increase in the price of ball copra to Rs 11,000/quintal. This will ensure a return of 51.8% for milling copra and 57.73% for ball copra.
- **The increase in MSP for Copra is in line with the principle of fixing the MSP at a level that is 1.5 times the all India weighted average cost of production as announced by the government during the Budget session of 2018-19.**
- The major aim is to double the income of farmers by 2022 with the assurance of a minimum of 50% as a margin of profit which is a progressive step.
- The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited and National Cooperative Consumer Federation of India Limited will continue to act as the nodal agencies for price support operations in the coconut growing states.
- **The dried portion of coconut is referred to as copra which is the kernel of the fruit of coconut palm.**
- Copra is valued for the extraction of coconut oil and also in livestock feed

<https://newsonair.com/2021/12/23/govt-hikes-msp-for-copra-aimed-at-doubling-farmers-income-by-2022/>

Transient High Energy Pulses

- Scientists from the Andalusian Institute of Astrophysics in association with Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences, Department of Science and Technology have found a **clue to understand violent short duration flares from a compact star called Magnetar.**
- This star is located 13 million light-years away.
- The massive supergiant stars with a total mass of 10 and 25 solar masses collapse and have a tendency to form neutron stars.
- **There are small groups of stars that consist of the most intense magnetic field known as magnetars.**
- The observation determined multiple pulses with the first pulse appearing only for a few microseconds.
- The detection of giant flares from magnetars are extremely rare.
- **The eruptions have offered an understanding of magnetic stresses that are exerted on neutron stars.**

<https://newsonair.com/2021/12/25/scientists-probe-into-high-energy-pulses-from-magnetars-the-most-magnetic-stars-in-the-universe/>

Fifth Siddha Day

- Ministry of Ayush celebrated the **fifth Siddha Day on the eve of the birth anniversary of Agathiyar which falls during the Ayilyam star of Margazhi month.**
- **This year the theme was based on “Strength of Siddha Medicine for Communicable Diseases”.**
- **Agathiyar (Agastya) is the leader of all Siddhas and he is also known as Kurumuni.**
- He played a pivotal role in spreading the Vedic religion in southern India.
- Agastya is one of the seven great sages (Saptarishis).
- He has left a prominent mark through his immense contributions in the field of Siddha medicine.
- Therayar and Tholkappiar were his disciples and students.
- Siddha system of medicine is one of the most ancient codified traditions of healthcare.
- The word Siddha means established truth, and individuals associated with the Siddha school of thought were called Siddhars.

<https://newsonair.gov.in/News?title=PM-Modi-chairs-Covid-19-review-meeting-amid-Omicron-spread&id=432062>

National Consumer Day

- Department of Consumer Affairs celebrated **National Consumer Day 2021 with the theme “ Consumer – Know your Rights”.**
- **Every 24th day of December is recognized as National Consumer Day which is backed by the fact that on this day, 1986 the Consumer Protection Act got the Presidential assent.**
- This day acknowledges the importance of strengthening consumer rights and aims at leading India in ‘One Nation One Standard’ along with more awareness spread across the consumers.

<https://newsonair.gov.in/News?title=Nation-celebrates-National-Consumer-Day-today&id=432124>

Good Governance Index 2021

- Good Governance Index 2021 was launched on the 25th of December, which is observed as Good Governance Day every year.
- This index is prepared by the Department of Administration Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).
- The GGI 2021 assessed the performance of states and union territories by using ten sectors and 58 indicators.
- A citizen centric administration serves as the major objective of good governance and the GGI offers a proper understanding of the status of governance in the states and union territories.
- Sectors of GGI 2020-21: Agriculture and allied sectors, Commerce & Industries, Human Resource Development, Public Health, Public Infrastructure, Utilities, Economic Governance, Social welfare and development, Judicial and public security, Environment, Citizen-centric governance

Sectors	Group A	Group B	NE & Hill States	UTs
Agriculture & Allied Sector	Andhra Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh	Mizoram	D & N Haveli
Commerce and Industry	Telangana	Uttar Pradesh	J & K	Daman & Diu
Human Resource Development	Punjab	Odisha	Himachal Pradesh	Chandigarh
Public Health	Kerala	West Bengal	Mizoram	A & N Island
Public Infrastructure and Utilities	Goa	Bihar	Himachal Pradesh	A & N Island
Economic Governance	Gujarat	Odisha	Tripura	Delhi
Social Welfare and Development	Telangana	Chhattisgarh	Sikkim	D & N Haveli
Judiciary and Public Safety	Tamil Nadu	Rajasthan	Nagaland	Chandigarh
Environment	Kerala	Rajasthan	Manipur	Daman & Diu
Citizen Centric Governance	Haryana	Rajasthan	Uttarakhand	Delhi
Composite	Gujarat	Madhya Pradesh	Himachal Pradesh	Delhi

<https://newsonair.com/2021/12/26/good-governance-index-2021-20-states-report-improved-composite-ggi-scores/>