



Mains Practice Question

Q. In what ways can India address issues of gender-based violence and promote the safety and security of women? (150 words)

14 Mar, 2023 GS Paper 2 Social Justice

Approach

- Start your answer by briefly introducing gender-based violence in India.
- Discuss various challenges and measures to address gender-based violence.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

- **Gender-Based Violence in India:**
 - Gender-based violence (GBV) is a **pervasive and serious issue in India**, with women and girls facing various forms of **violence, harassment, and discrimination in both private and public spheres**. Despite various laws and policies in place, the country still grapples with high rates of gender-based violence.
 - India has one of the **highest rates of violence against women in the world**. According to the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCEB)**, in **2021**, a total of **4,05,861 cases of crimes against women were reported in India, of which 32,033 cases were of rape**.
 - However, experts suggest that these numbers only represent a fraction of the actual cases, as **many cases of gender-based violence go unreported due to societal stigma, fear, and lack of trust in the legal system**.

Body

- **Challenges in Addressing Gender-Based Violence:**
 - The challenges in addressing gender-based violence in India are multi-faceted.
 - **Patriarchal Attitude:** One of the significant challenges is the deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes and **gender stereotypes that perpetuate violence against women**.
 - Women are often seen as **inferior and subordinate to men**, leading to discriminatory practices such as female infanticide, dowry deaths, and honor killings.
 - **Lack of Awareness:** There is a lack of awareness and understanding of gender-based violence among the general public and law enforcement agencies.
 - The police and judiciary have been criticized for their insensitive handling of cases of gender-based violence, leading to a lack of trust among victims.
- **Addressing Gender-Based Violence:**
 - There are various ways in which India can address gender-based violence and promote the safety and security of women. Some of these are:
 - **Increasing Awareness and Education:** Education and awareness campaigns should be conducted to **sensitize the public about the issue of gender-based violence**.

- This can include **school-based education programs, community-level campaigns**, and public awareness through various media platforms.
- **Strengthening Legal Framework:** The legal framework for gender-based violence needs to be strengthened, including strict implementation of existing laws and policies.
 - There is also a need to **expand the definition of gender-based violence** to include various forms of **violence against women, such as sexual harassment, stalking, and domestic violence**.
- **Improving Access to Justice:** The judiciary system should be made more accessible and friendly towards women.
 - This can include **setting up fast-track courts, increasing the number of female judges and lawyers**, and providing free legal aid to women who cannot afford it.
- **Empowering Women:** Empowering women through education, economic opportunities, and political participation can help in reducing the incidence of gender-based violence.
 - Women should be encouraged to report cases of violence and participate in decision-making processes at all levels.
- **Examples of Successful Interventions:**
 - There are some successful interventions that have been implemented in India to address gender-based violence. Some of these are:
 - **One-Stop Centers (OSC):** The OSC is a facility that **provides various services to women who are survivors of gender-based violence, including medical, legal, and counseling services**.
 - These centers have been established across the country, and their success has been demonstrated through increased reporting of cases and improved access to justice for women.
 - **Nirbhaya Fund:** The Nirbhaya Fund was established in 2013 to support initiatives **aimed at enhancing the safety and security of women**.
 - The fund has supported various projects, including setting up of women helplines, GPS-enabled panic buttons in public transport, and safe city initiatives.

Conclusion

- Gender-based violence is a significant challenge that India faces today. India needs to prioritize the issue of gender-based violence and work towards creating a safe and secure environment for women.
 - It is only through collective action and sustained efforts that India can effectively address the issue of gender-based violence and ensure the rights and dignity of women.