



International Day of Rural Women

For Prelims: International Day of Rural Women, Civil society Organisations, MGNREGA, UPSC, IAS, UPSC CSE Previous Year Question

For Mains: Issues of Women in Rural Economy, Measures that can be taken to Uplift Rural Women Workers

Why in News?

Every year, International Day of Rural Women is celebrated on 15th October.

Why do we Celebrate the International Day of Rural Women?

▪ Background:

- The idea of honouring rural women with a special day was put forward by international NGOs at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.
- The first International Day of Rural Women was observed on 15th October 2008. This new international day was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/136 in 2007.

▪ About:

- The day aims to **create awareness about the fact that the engagement of rural women diversifies** family livelihood, yet their efforts largely go unappreciated.
- It recognizes "the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty."

▪ Theme for 2022:

- "Rural Women, key for a world free from hunger and poverty."

What are the Challenges Faced by Rural Women Workers in India?

▪ Incomplete Presentation of Data:

- The rural economy suffers when **women stop looking for work** because they believe there is no work available, often incorrectly described as "dropping out" or "Leaving the market".

▪ Absence of Pay Parity:

- In the field of manual labour work, **women are being paid less than men in terms of piece rate** due to physical constraints in lifting heavy weights.

▪ Lack of Education:

- Majority of women construction workers are not registered as "**Construction Workers**" and therefore **ineligible for any benefit** accruing to them from the Construction Workers' Welfare Board.
- The paid formal jobs go to men and women with higher educational qualifications, leaving women with education till secondary level for non-agricultural, construction, house care and other roles.

▪ Limitation of MGNREGA:

- The [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act \(MGNREGA\)](#), a labour demand-driven programme, is limited to providing only 100 days of paid labour on public works projects per year.
- For the rest of the period, **women workers have to continuously look for alternative sources of income to meet** expenses.
- **Financial Constraints:**
 - What the women earn from multiple tasks, for which there are no fixed rates is in no way equal to the amount of labour they do.
 - **Due to non-availability of sufficient funds and lack of knowledge**, they're most vulnerable to land in debt traps.

What Initiatives Taken for the Upliftment for Rural Women Workers?

- **e-Shram Portal:**
 - [e-Shram Portal](#) was launched to register 38 crore unorganised workers such as construction labourers, migrant workforce, street vendors, and domestic workers, among others.
- **The Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP):**
 - Launched in 2011, it is aimed at **imparting skill development and capacity building** programmes for rural women.
 - This scheme was introduced as a sub component of [DAY-NRLM \(Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission\)](#) and implemented through State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM) across India.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):**
 - Launched in 2015, it aims to train over 40 crore people in India in different skills by 2022. It aims at vocational training and certification of Indian youth for a better livelihood and respect in the society.
- **Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)**
 - **PMJDY** has boosted confidence and prospects of rural women participation in economic activities. The Jan Dhan campaign has ensured access to financial services, viz, banking/ savings and deposit accounts, remittance, credit, insurance, pension in an affordable manner to rural women.
- **Other Initiatives**
 - [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana \(PMMVY\)](#)
 - [Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana](#)
 - [Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization Scheme](#)
 - [PM-KISAN Scheme](#)

Way Forward

- **Survey Conduction:**
 - **Timely village surveys should be conducted** which could reveal the real image of ground reality, as with the deep penetration of capitalist processes in rural India, there is a crisis of livelihood options for rural workers.
 - Widespread surveys of poor rural women and how they spend their time are an urgent necessity.
- **Adult Education and Training:**
 - Women lack access to quality adult education and training, which is one of the greatest barriers to their sustainable development.
 - Women should receive life skills, and social skills training as part of capacity building and adult training.
- **MGNREGA Standards:**
 - The performance standards set under MGNREGA **should be established gender-wise and the work sites made more worker friendly.**
 - The 'compulsory' woman worker must be recognised and protected by laws and policies that address her issues.

Prelims

Q. 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action', often seen in the news, is (2015)

(a) a strategy to tackle the regional terrorism, an outcome of a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

(b) a plan of action for sustainable economic growth in the Asia-Pacific Region, an outcome of the deliberations of the Asia-Pacific Economic Forum

(c) an agenda for women's empowerment, an outcome of a World Conference convened by the United Nations

(d) a strategy to combat wildlife trafficking, a declaration of the East Asia Summit

Ans: (c)

Exp:

- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is a global commitment to achieve **equality, development and peace for women** worldwide. It was adopted in September, **1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing**. It builds upon consensus and progress made at earlier UN Conferences, particularly the Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985.
- The Platform for Action is an agenda for women's empowerment. It aims at accelerating the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and at removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making.
- **Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. "Micro-Finance as an anti-poverty vaccine, is aimed at asset creation and income security of the rural poor in India". Evaluate the role of the Self Help Groups in achieving the twin objectives along with empowering women in rural India. **(2020)**

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