




**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

# **SOCIOLOGY**

## **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**January - June**  
**2024**



 / SleepyclassesIAS

 **1800-890-3043**

## Contents

### **January 2024**

The Ghosts We Carry .....	4
Ageism and Resurging COVID-19 Cases .....	6
Rise of DINKs: Why more couples are now opting for dual income, no kids.....	7
‘Incestuous relationship may gain legitimacy’:.....	9
Why women prefer Modi’s BJP .....	11
A blurred mapping of internal female migration .....	13
How smartphones can make education inclusive .....	15
No, smartphones cannot replace classrooms. Here’s why .....	16
Growth mania can be injurious to society .....	18

### **February 2024**

Gender Equality and a Four-day Workweek.....	20
Recalibrating merit in the age of Artificial Intelligence .....	22
Business of Business Is Not Just Business .....	25
The Marching Millions.....	27
Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code bans polygamy:among Muslims? .....	29
Shaping Indian Polity.....	31
The path towards a pluralist civil society.....	32
Population growth committee: Move beyond Emergency-era fears.....	34
Multidimensional poverty: meaning, numbers .....	36

### **March 2024**

COVID-19 Cuts in Sociology of South Asia .....	38
Breaking Down the Pink Tax .....	40
Digital Capital and Segregated Schooling.....	43
This Women’s Day, let’s talk about masculinity .....	45
Employment Status of Digital Platform Workers .....	47
If democracy is to survive the age of AI, it must be updated .....	50
Green jobs and the problem of gender disparity .....	51
Ageism, Euthanasia, and Crimes against the Elderly .....	53
Express View on India’s falling fertility rate: A wake-up call.....	55
Express View on World Inequality Lab report: The unlevel field .....	57
World Inequality Lab report on India fails to capture the country’s economic reality .....	59

## **April 2024**

Smaller citizens: the gaps in India's education system.....	60
How SC verdict on childcare leave opens up possibilities for women .....	62
India can learn from Japan's 'womenomics' reforms .....	64
Age is just a number – a study may help make the argument.....	66
Reversing the global democratic recession.....	67
Why the young don't want to have children – and how to fix that .....	69
Urbanisation, no liberating force for Dalits .....	71
The limitations of Ambedkarite Dalit politics today .....	73
Gone too soon – the subject of youth suicide in India .....	75

## **May 2024**

For women-led development, invest in the Care Economy .....	78
Theory and Praxis of Feminist Internationalist Solidarity .....	81
Bridging the Gender Gap .....	83
Shifting Trends in Global Migration .....	85
Should reservation in jobs only be in proportion to the population? .....	87
Recognising Cohabitation Relationships .....	90
The Need for Legislative Framework .....	90
Behind Supreme Court's remarks on sanctity of marriage, a growing social anxiety .....	92
In India, the idea of democracy differs from its practice .....	94

## **June 2024**

Cost of inequality: What India's 129 rank in Global Gender Gap Index means.....	96
Why caste should inform debates on inequality in the country .....	98
Addressing Workplace Inequality: The Challenges Facing Married, Working Women .....	100
Does inequality lead to growth?   Explained .....	103
Passion in the Modern Workplace .....	105
What's the point of an AI candidate in Britain's general election? .....	107
Hamare Baarah and the myth of India's Muslim population 'explosion' .....	109
Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes: .....	111

# The Ghosts We Carry

## Partition Horrors and Hauntology

Vol. 59, Issue No. 4, 27 Jan, 2024, EPW

### Chapter:

#### 4 - Sociological Thinkers

- **Hauntology**, a term coined by philosopher Jacques **Derrida**, challenges conventional understandings of time and presence, proposing a complex relationship with the past that continues to influence the present and future.
- This concept emerges from Derrida's critical examination of metaphysics and his deconstructive approach to language and text.
- It plays on the similarity in French between the words "haunt" and "ontology," intertwining the study of being with the idea of haunting.
- This idea is particularly relevant when examining the enduring impact of the 1947 India-Pakistan partition, a period marked by division, displacement, and suffering that has left indelible scars on the collective memory of the subcontinent.



### Core Principles of Hauntology:

#### Presence of Absence:

- Hauntology posits that what is no longer (the past) and what is not yet (the future) can haunt the present, suggesting that the absent, the **ghostly remnants of what was, continues to impact current realities and perceptions**.

#### Disruption of Linear Time:

- By emphasizing the influence of spectral presences, hauntology disrupts linear conceptions of time.
- **It introduces a temporal complexity where past, present, and future coexist in a non-sequential form**, allowing the past to continually affect the present.

#### Questioning Closure:

- Hauntology **resists the notion of closure or completion**, suggesting that history and personal and collective traumas resist neat endings.
- It **emphasizes the ongoing nature of mourning and memory**.

#### Ethical and Political Implications:

- Hauntology extends beyond philosophical speculation into ethical and political dimensions.
- It **calls for a reconsideration of justice, memory, and responsibility**, urging us to acknowledge and respond to the demands of past injustices that persist in the present.

#### Cultural and Artistic Expression:

- In the realms of literature, music, and art, hauntology has been employed to explore themes of nostalgia, memory, and the uncanny.

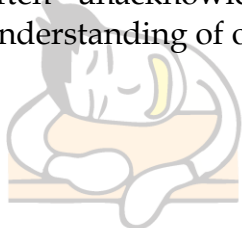
- **Artists and writers use hauntology to critique contemporary culture** by highlighting how past styles, ideas, and concerns persist in modern expressions, creating a sense of anachronism and temporal dislocation.

### Critique of Presentism:

- Hauntology offers a critical stance on "presentism," the overemphasis on the present to the exclusion of the past and future.
- It challenges the notion that the present is detached and superior to the past, advocating instead for an acknowledgment of how historical events continue to shape contemporary society.

### Significance and Application:

- In examining social and political events, such as the enduring impact of historical traumas or the legacies of colonialism, **hauntology provides a framework for understanding how these past events remain active in shaping current identities, policies, and societal structures.**
- It encourages a reflective engagement with history, where the specters of the past are recognized as vital participants in ongoing conversations about justice, reconciliation, and collective memory.
- Through hauntology, Derrida invites us to consider the complex ways in which unseen, often unacknowledged influences from the past haunt our present, shaping our understanding of ourselves and our world in profound ways.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

## Ageism and Resurging COVID-19 Cases

Vol. 59, Issue No. 3, 20 Jan, 2024, EPW

**Chapter:**

**5 - Stratification and Mobility**

### Introduction to Ageism

- Ageism, as defined by **R N Butler**, is the systematic discrimination against individuals based on their age.
- This discriminatory practice was seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the context of medical triage, where older individuals were often deemed less worthy of receiving critical medical resources like ventilators.
- The discriminatory triage practices during the pandemic can be likened to "geronticide," historically known as the act of killing the elderly.



### Examples of Discriminatory Practices

- In Italy, the **Italian Society of Anesthesia, Analgesia, Resuscitation, and Intensive Care** suggested implementing an age limit for accessing intensive care units, effectively prioritizing the young.
- Reports from the United States disclosed official guidelines in some hospitals that favored younger patients over older ones, aiming to maximize life years saved rather than lives saved.

### Legal Perspectives

- International legal instruments, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, emphasize the government's obligation to ensure the right to health for all citizens, making the failure to provide timely medical treatment a violation of the right to life.

### WHO's Stance

- The World Health Organization advocates for the right to health to be enjoyed without discrimination, including age discrimination.

### Conclusion

- It is crucial for all stakeholders, including governments, healthcare institutions, and the international community, to ensure equitable access to healthcare, uphold human rights, and prevent the repetition of discriminatory practices seen in the pandemic's earlier phases.



# Rise of DINKs: Why more couples are now opting for dual income, no kids

January 25, 2024, Indian Express

## Chapter:

### 9 - Systems of Kinship

#### Introduction

- The **DINK** (Dual Income, No Kids) lifestyle is becoming an increasingly popular choice among couples worldwide, reflecting a significant shift in societal values and priorities.
- This trend is especially notable in urban areas and social media platforms have played a crucial role in highlighting the benefits of this lifestyle, contributing to its growing appeal among younger generations.



Would you choose the DINK life? (Source: Freepik)

#### What is DINK

- DINK stands for **Dual Income, No Kids**, describing couples who opt to live without children while both partners contribute to the household income.
- While the term has been around since the late 1980s, the heyday of the yuppie culture – which refers to the lives led by young urban professionals – it has recently gained traction on social media, particularly TikTok and Instagram.
- [This phenomenon can be analyzed using the theory of Individualization, which posits that individuals increasingly make life choices based on personal preferences rather than societal expectations]*

#### Subdivision in the DINK Category

The DINK category has evolved to include several subdivisions, each reflecting specific motivations and priorities:

- DINKWAD (Dual Income, No Kids, With A Dog):** Couples who choose to share their lives with pets instead of children, focusing on the joy and companionship animals bring.
- GINK (Green Inclination, No Kids):** Individuals or couples who decide against having children due to environmental concerns, aiming to reduce their carbon footprint and contribute to sustainability efforts.
- THINKERs (Two Healthy Incomes, No Kids, Early Retirement):** Couples prioritizing financial independence and early retirement, often investing and saving aggressively to achieve financial freedom at a younger age.
- [Reflects a shift towards post-materialist values (a term popularized by the political scientist Ronald Inglehart) which signifies a movement towards valuing autonomy, self-expression, and quality of life over traditional material and familial security concerns]*

#### Statistics Related to DINK

- The population of **DINKs in India** has been growing at 30 per cent per annum, according to Gitnux Market Data Report 2024.
- In fact, the last census taken in 2011 shows that the **DINK lifestyle is prevalent in nearly 42 per cent of two-member rural families** compared to 22 per cent of similar urban families.

- According to a **2021 report by the Pew Research Center**, **61 per cent of millennials said they are not having kids because they simply cannot afford to.**
- *[This trend can be examined through Demographic Transition Theory, noting shifts in birth rates as societies develop economically]*

## Reason for DINK

Several factors contribute to the decision to embrace a DINK lifestyle, including:

- **Financial considerations:** The high cost of raising children, combined with economic uncertainties, makes a child-free lifestyle more appealing.
- **Personal freedom:** Couples value the ability to travel, pursue hobbies, and maintain a flexible schedule without the responsibilities of childcare.
- **Career focus:** Without the demands of parenthood, individuals can dedicate more time and energy to professional advancement.
- **Environmental and sustainability concerns:** Some choose not to have children due to worries about overpopulation and the state of the planet.
- **Desire for personal growth:** The freedom from parenting duties allows for greater self-discovery and personal development.

## Impact of DINK

The DINK lifestyle has both personal and societal implications:

- **Economic:** DINK couples typically have more disposable income, influencing market trends and **consumer behaviors.**
- **Social dynamics:** With fewer children being born, there could be **long-term effects on demographics**, including **aging populations** and **changes in family structures.**
- **Cultural shift:** The rise of DINK couples reflects **changing attitudes towards family, success, and fulfillment, moving away from traditional norms.**



## 'Incestuous relationship may gain legitimacy': Delhi High Court upholds prohibition on 'sapinda marriages' under Hindu Marriage Act

January 25, 2024, Indian Express

Chapter:

B-5 Systems of Kinship

### Introduction

- The concept of sapinda marriage, its legal framework, and exceptions under the Hindu Marriage Act (HMA) have recently been scrutinized by the Delhi High Court.



The court was hearing a plea filed by a woman challenging Section 5(v) (conditions for a Hindu marriage) of the Hindu Marriage Act. Express file photo

### What is Sapinda Marriage

- Sapinda marriage refers to a union between individuals who are related to each other through common ancestors within a specific number of generations.
- Under the HMA, such marriages are generally prohibited to maintain social and familial norms and prevent incestuous relationships.
- [Invoking Claude Levi-Strauss views on Incest:
- The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss developed a general argument for the universality of the incest taboo in human societies.*
- His argument begins with the claim that the incest taboo is in effect a prohibition against endogamy, and the effect is to encourage exogamy.*
- Through exogamy, otherwise unrelated households or lineages will form relationships through marriage, thus strengthening social solidarity.*
- That is, Levi-Strauss views marriage as an exchange of women between two social groups]*

### Law Relating to Sapinda Marriage

- The legal basis for the prohibition of sapinda marriages is found in Section 5(v) of the HMA.
- This section dictates that marriages between sapindas are not allowed.
- The law provides for an exception to the prohibition on sapinda marriages if there is an existing custom or usage that allows for such marriages.
- This exception requires rigorous proof to ensure that the custom is valid and has the force of law.

### Case History

- The case in question involved a woman challenging the constitutionality of Section 5(v) of the HMA after a trial court declared her marriage to her distant cousin null and void due to it being a sapinda marriage.
- The woman's appeal was dismissed by the Delhi High Court, which led her to challenge the provision's validity on the grounds of it violating the principle of equality before the law as enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution.

## Court Judgement

- The Delhi High Court upheld the prohibition on sapinda marriages under the HMA, rejecting the woman's contention that Section 5(v) violates Article 14 of the Constitution.
- The court emphasized the necessity of custom or usage having the force of law for exceptions to the rule against sapinda marriages.
- It was concluded that the woman had failed to prove the existence of such a custom in her case, relying instead on the consent of parents, which was deemed insufficient.
- The court's decision underscores the importance of adhering to established legal and social norms regarding marriage within the Hindu community, while also acknowledging the potential for exceptions under specific customary practices.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

## Why women prefer Modi's BJP

January 8, 2024, Indian Express

Chapter:

C-4 Politics and Society

### Seva as a Political Strategy

- The **BJP** has incorporated the concept of **seva** as a core theme in its political narrative, highlighted by Modi's leadership.
- It is reflected in the party's messaging and grassroots initiatives like celebrating **Seva Saptah/Pakhwara** (Service Week/Fortnight) and **Seva hi Sangathan** or naming Covid-relief programmes as **Seva hi Sangathan** (Organisation as Service).
- Research by anthropologists **Atreyee Sen and Tarini Bedi** reveals that, similar strategies are observed in other parties like the **Shiv Sena**, where women have characterized their political activism as predominantly social work, with a blend of 80% social service and 20% politics.
- Historically Gandhi's leadership in Congress utilized **seva** to mobilize women into the nationalist movement, framing political participation as a form of service that was socially acceptable.
- [Symbolic Interactionism perspective can help us understand how the emphasis on seva creates meaningful symbols associated with service and altruism]*



The BJP's success story among women is not confined to the ballot box. (PTI)

### Social Service Orientation of Parties:

- By framing itself as a social service organization, the **parties like BJP** seeks to position itself at the **nexus of state and society**, creating a positive image that contributes to its appeal.
- Activities like medical camps, blood donation drives, and cultural events serve as platforms for community engagement, enabling the party to foster deeper connections with women at the local level.
- [The social service orientation can be analyzed through the lens of social capital, where networks, norms, and social trust are leveraged for political gain]*

### Bridging Gender Roles and Politics

- Women's wings within the BJP, such as the **Mahila Morcha**, play a pivotal role in seva-related activities, aligning them with local culture and history, which resonates with the community and helps to attract women to the party.
- Seva-based initiatives** help to navigate the stigma associated with "dirty" party politics by framing political engagement as service, making it more acceptable for women's participation.
- Seva narrative complements traditional views of women's roles, **presenting political engagement as extension of domestic responsibilities & selflessness**.
- [Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence can be applied to understand the subtle ways in which the narrative of political engagement as service reinforces and perpetuates traditional gender norms, even as it seeks to empower women politically]*

- While welfare schemes are important, the **strategic use of political communication and outreach that addresses domestic barriers** is critical for enhancing women's political agency and representation in the future.
- In conclusion, seva serves as a strategic tool that harmonizes the act of service with political engagement, facilitating women's entry into the political sphere by aligning with societal norms and addressing the barriers they face in assuming public roles.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

## A blurred mapping of internal female migration

January 31, 2024, The Hindu

Chapter:

C-6 Population Dynamics

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation



"On a broader scale, a change in narrative is required, starting with an increased collection of female-specific data." Photo Credits: The Hindu

- The **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)**, which collects data on employment and unemployment indicators in the country, has estimated **Internal migration to be 27% from June 2020 to 2021**.
- **Women, especially of working age, comprise a greater share of the migrant pool** but there is little dialogue surrounding them.
- It also **raises the question of whether women face employment barriers due to post-migration conditions**.
- **PLFS data suggest that the leading reason for migration among women is marriage (81%), followed by migration of family members (10%), employment (2.42%), and migration for education opportunities (0.48%).**
- *[This migration trend can be explored using the concept of "gendered migration," which examines how migration experiences and patterns are shaped by gender roles and expectations]*
- *[The predominance of marriage as a reason for women's migration can be analyzed through the lens of "social reproduction," a process by which a society reproduces itself from one generation to another and also within generations]*

**National surveys provide an inaccurate picture of women's migration and employment due to:**

- **Omission of Secondary Motives:** Key migration drivers like climate shocks and food insecurity are not captured, focusing mainly on marriage and family migration.
- **Underreporting of Employment:** High unemployment figures among migrant women fail to reflect casual or informal employment, exacerbated by data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Definitional Narrowness:** Employment definitions based on formal contracts exclude many women performing informal or unpaid work, misclassifying them as unemployed.
- **Domestic Responsibilities:** Employment choices influenced by domestic duties are often not recognized as formal employment, leading to misreported employment status.
- *[This scenario can be analyzed through the concept of Invisible Labour (Arlie Hochschild), which recognizes the extensive range of unpaid, underreported, and informal work that women often engage in, not captured by traditional employment metrics]*

**The barriers faced by women in entering the labor force include:**

- **Limited Education:** In the **PLFS data, 85% of women have less than 10 years of education**, reducing their employment opportunities.
- **Lack of Social Networks:** **Especially after migration**, the absence of social connections hinders employment chances for women.



- *[These barriers can be explored through the Social Capital Theory (Pierre Bourdieu), which suggests that social networks and connections are crucial for accessing employment opportunities. The absence of these networks for migrant women exacerbates their vulnerabilities and limits their job prospects]*
- **Post-Pandemic Recovery Issues:** A study by Yale University observed that 55% of women did not return to work post-COVID-19, and those who did earned only 56% of their pre-pandemic income.
- **Invisibility in Labor Force:** Despite a 101% increase in female migration for employment between 2001 and 2011, women remain largely invisible, leading to unaddressed struggles and marginalization.
- **Political Neglect:** Women migrants are not seen as a significant vote bank, leading to their needs being overlooked in political agendas and resulting in a lack of targeted policies.
- **Inadequate Policy Design:** Policies often fail to address female migrants' specific needs, focusing mainly on the male migrant population, exemplified by initiatives like One Nation One Ration Card and affordable rental housing complexes.

**To address the issues faced by women in the labor force, the following steps are recommended:**

- **Enhance National Surveys:** Collect more detailed information on the socio-economic conditions of migrants post-migration, as current data is insufficient.
- **Social Security Data:** Address the gap in data on social security benefits, noting that only about 7% of the population is reported to have access, with no information on the remainder.
- **Incorporate Time-use Data:** Include time-use data in national surveys to better understand the activities and contributions of unemployed female migrants, which is currently not the norm in India.
- **Change the Narrative:** Focus on collecting female-specific data to highlight and bring awareness to the challenges faced by women migrants, thereby encouraging more informed and progressive policymaking.



## How smartphones can make education inclusive

January 18, 2024, Indian Express

Chapter:

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation

Latest ASER Report

- **Age Group Focus:** The report concentrates on rural 14-18-year-olds, a demographic vital for realizing India's demographic dividend.
- **Educational Progress:** There's an encouraging trend of students advancing to secondary education, debunking fears of pandemic-induced dropout rates.



### Educational Attainment and Challenges

- **Increased Schooling:** Current generations have the highest years of schooling on record in India.
- **Deficit in Foundational Skills:**
  - **Reading:** Approximately 25% of those surveyed struggle with reading texts at a Grade 2 level in their local language.
  - **Arithmetic:** Over 50% of students face difficulties with arithmetic skills expected by Grade 5.
  - **Implications:** These skill gaps pose a risk to the quality of the future labor force and the success of skilling programs.

### Technological Penetration and Education

- **Smartphone Usage:** With high household smartphone penetration, there is potential for enhancing educational access.
- **Learning vs. Entertainment:** The current challenge is to incentivize the use of smartphones for education rather than solely for entertainment.
- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:** It aims to integrate digital technology into education, shifting from a curriculum-centric to a learner-centric approach.

### Technological Caution

- **Avoiding Technological Fundamentalism:** Policymakers are advised to leverage digital capabilities for education, but remain cautious of over-reliance on technology.
- *[This caution can be analyzed through critical evaluation of "technological determinism", a theory that assumes that technology is the primary determinant of societal outcomes]*

### India's Vocational Training Landscape:

- **Current Engagement:** Only 6% of surveyed youth are enrolled in vocational courses.
- **Policy Implications:** There's a critical need to revamp vocational education to align with the aspirational goals set out in NEP.

### Conclusion

- **Policy Recommendations:** The ASER report provides insights that can guide policymakers to reform education in a way that empowers the youth.

## No, smartphones cannot replace classrooms. Here's why

January 22, 2024, Indian Express

**Chapter:**

*C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation*

### Reasons Why Smartphones Cannot Replace Classrooms

**Learning Process Complexity:**

- The **educationist and media theorist Neil Postman** highlighted that **effective learning demands sequence, perspiration, perseverance, and perplexity.**
- These elements underscore the complexities and disciplined approach required in the educational process, which may not be fully replicated through smartphone-based learning.



**Educational Technology as "Quasi-Pedagogical":**

- **Sociologist Basil Bernstein** called digital technology "quasi-pedagogical" wherein education becomes a process of transmission, and the provider of the transmission is often unaware of the consequences of such a transmission.
- Education, on the other hand, does not entail the transmission of information or transaction of ideas.
- It is an intended and planned activity involving the mutual construction of knowledge through dialogue and discovery.

**Lack of Contextual and Social Considerations:**

- The belief that **learning** can occur "anytime-anywhere" **through smartphones** ignores **crucial socio-economic realities that affect learning, such as violence, discrimination, and poverty.**
- **Classrooms** offer a controlled environment that mitigates these factors, fostering a more equitable and focused learning experience.

**Undermining of Collaborative Learning Environments:**

- Classrooms provide essential spaces for students to engage with teachers and peers, overcoming socio-economic barriers and promoting collaborative learning.
- **This physical interaction is pivotal in challenging preconceived notions and promoting inclusivity, which is often missed in digital learning environments.**
- The **uninhibited internet consumption** can expose learners to ideas that could **strengthen the identities they were ascribed at birth**, rather than challenging them.

**Exacerbation of Inequalities:**

- **Mark West** from UNESCO **noted** in his recent book "An Ed-Tech Tragedy?" that **educational technology could worsen existing inequalities, diminish education quality, slow down socialization processes, and promote consumerism among stakeholders.**
- This perspective suggests that reliance on smartphones for education can lead to broader social and educational disparities.

## Consumerism in Education:

- The ease of access to information via smartphones can lead to a consumerist approach to learning, where students, parents, and teachers view education as a commodity rather than a transformative process.
- This undermines the essence of education as a journey of intellectual and personal growth.
- In conclusion, while smartphones and digital technologies offer supplementary avenues for accessing information, they fall short of replacing the multifaceted, interactive, and socio-culturally responsive environments provided by classrooms.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

## Growth mania can be injurious to society

January 30, 2024, The Hindu

### Chapter:

#### C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation

- The World Economic Forum spotlighted India's projected \$10 trillion economy, aligning with leaders' aims like **Modi's \$5 trillion target by 2024**.
- **Despite missed goals, Indian politicians across parties prioritize growth**, reflecting its importance for improving living standards in India.
- The first thing to note about the **recent growth in India** is that it **has been accompanied by growing inequality**.
- *[Thomas Piketty in his work on capital and inequality highlights how economic growth, without proper redistribution mechanisms, can lead to increased wealth concentration and social inequality]*
- This trend commenced in the 1980s, it picked up in the next decade, after which it has been unstoppable.
- It has, by now, reached levels that make India one of the more unequal societies in the world.
- The world's leading inequality researchers are very describing **India** as **"a poor country with an affluent elite"** ('World Inequality Report', 2022).



\*The first thing to note about the recent growth in India is that it has been accompanied by growing inequality' | Photo Credit: R. RAVINDRAN

### Rural wage rates

- **Real Wage Rate Growth:** From 2014 to 2022-23, the real wage rate of agricultural labor has increased by 4.6% as per data published by the Labour Bureau.
- **Comparison with Non-agricultural and Construction Workers:** The real wage rates for non-agricultural and construction workers have actually decreased by the end of the studied period, compared to agricultural workers.
- **Employment Distribution:** According to the Sixth Economic Census of India (2013-14), 51.7% of employed individuals are in rural India, with a majority (68.9%) being non-agricultural workers.
- **Stagnant Real Wages:** About 35% of India's workforce has not seen real wage growth since 2014, indicating that despite economic growth, per capita income at the lower end of the economic spectrum is not increasing.
- **Comparison with Overall Economic Growth:** While the real per capita income in India has increased by 37% from 2014 to 2023, the real wage of agricultural labor has grown by less than 5%, highlighting a disparity in income growth.

### Why inequality does matter

#### Inequality matters for several key reasons:

- **Social Pathology:** **Unequal societies experience higher instances of violence, disease, and mental health disorders.**

The divide between the rich and the poor leads to social tensions, with the wealthy needing to isolate themselves in gated communities for protection.

- *[This echoes the ideas of Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, who in "The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better" argue that societies with more equal distribution of incomes have better health and fewer social problems than those with greater disparities]*
- **Hindrance to Collective Action:** Inequality impedes the ability to achieve collective goals, especially in critical areas requiring unanimous public effort. It lowers trust between different socio-economic groups, who value public goods differently due to their varying needs and capabilities.
- **Obstacle to Public Good Development:** Persistent inequality undermines efforts to build and maintain public goods, from sanitation and urban waste management to environmental conservation and climate change mitigation. Those excluded from economic growth are less inclined to contribute to these goals, as their immediate needs are unmet.
- *[The tragedy of the commons, as explained by Garrett Hardin, can be applied here, showing how individual interests and economic inequalities can lead to the overexploitation and depletion of public goods and resources]*
- **Contrary to Democratic Principles:** The existence of significant economic disparities is fundamentally at odds with the principles of democracy, which India prides itself on. Democracy aims for equitable opportunities and outcomes for all citizens.
- *[This point relates to Alexis de Tocqueville's warnings about the dangers of income inequality to democracy, suggesting that excessive disparities undermine the democratic ethos of equality and fraternity]*
- **Inequality of Opportunity:** India's economic policies have historically not adequately addressed the inequality of opportunity across its population. This oversight perpetuates and possibly worsens the gap between different socio-economic groups, especially when the focus of political discourse is on economic growth rather than equitable distribution.
- *[This can be examined through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu's forms of capital—economic, social, and cultural—and how inequalities in these forms of capital can lead to persistent social inequalities and limit social mobility]*



## Gender Equality and a Four-day Workweek

Vol. 59, Issue No. 8, 24 Feb, 2024, EPW

### Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

6 - Works and Economic Life

### Introduction:



- The **European Union** (EU) is currently at the forefront of a **groundbreaking experiment** – exploring the potential benefits of a **four-day workweek**.
- **Belgium** has taken the first step towards it, granting employees the **right to work for four days with full pay**.
- The move is anticipated to have **secondary benefits** for **gender equality in the EU**.

### Gender Disparity in EU:

- Currently, EU women have a significantly **lower employment rate** than men (69.3% employment rate compared to men's 80% as reported in 2022)
- Women **earn substantially less per hour** (with women earning 12.7% less than men per hour of work in 2021)
- They are also **less present in high-level corporate roles**.
- These gender disparities are connected to women's larger share of **unpaid home and care work**, **less flexible job schedules**, and longstanding societal stereotypes.
  - *[These disparities reflect the "double burden" concept (Patricia Hill Collins), where women undertake both paid employment and the majority of unpaid household labor, leading to inequities in both spheres]*

### Impact of Four-day Workweek on Gender Imbalance:

- It could lead to a **redistribution of unpaid domestic work** that typically falls on women, encouraging fairer household labor divisions.
- An extra day off weekly might **empower women to seek out and excel in jobs traditionally dominated by men**.
  - *[This potential shift reflects the "work-life balance" concept (Arlie Hochschild), emphasizing the importance of balancing professional and personal life to achieve gender equality]*

### Challenges in Implementing Four-day Workweek:

- Companies need to ensure that the same amount of work can be accomplished in less time.
- Workers' earnings must remain consistent despite working fewer days.
- Wider cultural shifts are **required to alter traditional views on gender roles** within the family and community.



## Results of Pilot Studies:

- Iceland's extensive trial between 2015 and 2019, involving about 2,500 workers with unchanged pay, was deemed highly successful, leading to widespread adoption of reduced working hours or flexible work arrangements for 90% of its workforce.
- Spain's pilot programme initiated in December 2022 aimed at assisting small- and medium-sized enterprises in reducing their workweek while maintaining salaries, reported notable improvements in work-life balance, employees' happiness, and sustained productivity levels.

## Broader View:

- A reduced workweek is a progressive concept but not a comprehensive fix for gender inequality.
- It is one aspect of a multi-pronged approach needed to break down systemic barriers in education, the legal system, and the economy that contribute to gender inequality.
  - *[This broader perspective aligns with the "intersectionality" framework (Kimberlé Crenshaw), indicating that gender inequality intersects with other forms of social stratification, requiring comprehensive strategies for change]*
- The EU's four-day workweek exploration suggests a potential shift towards narrowing the gender gap, but it requires careful planning, cultural changes, continuous study, and policy reinforcement to realize its full potential in creating a more gender-equal society.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

## Recalibrating merit in the age of Artificial Intelligence

February 19, 2024, The Hindu

### Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

10 - Social Change in Modern Society

### Introduction to Meritocracy

- Fundamental Principle: Meritocracy advocates for the advancement of individuals based on talent, effort, and achievement, rather than on class, caste, or hereditary privileges.
- Societal Debates: Intense discussions surround meritocracy, with supporters advocating its fairness and critics pointing out its potential to reinforce systemic inequalities.



### Historical and Critical Perspectives on Meritocracy

#### Michael Young:

- Young, a British sociologist, foresaw a dystopian meritocratic world in his satirical book, *The Rise of the Meritocracy* (1958).
- He envisioned a future, specifically 2034, as a society where social class and mobility were determined solely by intelligence and effort, as measured through standardised testing and educational achievement.
- It was a critique of the then-emerging trend towards a merit-based system, which he feared would lead to a new form of social stratification.

#### Michael Sandel:

- Sandel's critique focuses on the divisive consequences, arguing that **meritocracy fosters a sense of entitlement among the successful and resentment among those left behind, thereby eroding social cohesion.**

#### Critical theorists:

- Critical theorists, including those from the Frankfurt School, also argue on similar lines by critiquing meritocracy for masking deeper power dynamics and inequalities.
- They say that **meritocracy can perpetuate social hierarchies by legitimising the status of the elite under the guise of fairness and neutrality.**

#### Post-structuralists:

- Post-structuralists challenge the notion of merit, questioning who defines merit and how it is measured.
- They argue that **concepts of merit are socially constructed and reflect the biases and interests of those in power.**
- Post-structuralism highlights the fluidity and contingency of merit, suggesting that **meritocratic systems are inherently subjective and can reinforce existing inequalities.**

#### Adrian Wooldridge:

- He lays stress on the practical evolution of meritocracy and its potential for reform.

- In his book, *The Aristocracy of Talent*, he explores how meritocracy, initially a force for progress and social mobility, has inadvertently fostered new inequalities by becoming somewhat hereditary, with privileges being passed down generations.
- Despite recognising the potential for meritocracy to create a new elite, Wooldridge believes in its intuitive fairness and proposes reforms that include making selective schools as “escalators into the elite” while improving access for underprivileged students and advocating better technical education.

## Artificial Intelligence's Impact on Meritocracy

### AI and Human Merit:

- By its very nature, AI questions the basis of human merit by introducing a non-human entity capable of performing tasks, making decisions, and even ‘creating’ at levels that can surpass human abilities.
- If machines perform the majority of tasks previously deemed as requiring human intelligence and creativity, the traditional metrics of merit become less relevant.
- OpenAI’s Sora is evidence that creativity is not an exclusive human trait any more.

### Access to Technology:

- Individuals with access to AI tools gain a significant advantage, not necessarily due to their personal abilities, but because of the enhanced capabilities of these tools.

### Bias in AI Systems:

- AI systems trained on historical data can perpetuate and even exacerbate biases present in that data, leading to discriminatory outcomes in areas such as hiring, law enforcement, and lending.
- These biases can disadvantage groups which are already marginalised.

### Job Displacement and Socioeconomic Impact:

- AI's diagnostic and predictive prowess, as seen in its ability to detect diseases like pancreatic cancer, signals the displacement of specialized jobs.
- AI would push the workforce towards either high-skill, high-wage jobs involving complex problem-solving and creativity or low-skill, low-wage jobs requiring physical presence and personal interaction, which AI cannot replicate yet.
- This polarisation will exacerbate socioeconomic disparities, as individuals without access to high-level education and training are pushed towards lower-wage roles.

### Opacity and Accountability in AI:

- The opaque nature of many AI algorithms, coupled with the concentration of power in a few tech giants, poses significant challenges to accountability.
- In a meritocratic society, individuals must understand the criteria by which their efforts and talents are evaluated.
- However, the ‘black box’ nature of many AI systems can obscure these criteria, making it difficult for individuals to know how to advance or challenge decisions made by AI, thus eroding the meritocratic ideal.

## Data Hegemony:

- At the organisational level, the core of AI's power lies in data and algorithms that process this data.
- Tech giants with access to unprecedented volumes of data have a distinct advantage in training more sophisticated and accurate AI models.
- This data hegemony means that these entities can set the standards for what constitutes 'merit' in the digital age, potentially sidelining smaller players who may have innovative ideas but need access to similar datasets.

## Conclusion

- The rise of AI compels a reassessment of what constitutes merit and how society recognizes and rewards it.
- Meritocracy's recalibration in the AI age demands a nuanced understanding of how technological capabilities can augment human potential and widen the gap in societal inequalities.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

# Business of Business Is Not Just Business

## Lobbying Universe in India

Vol. 59, Issue No. 6, 10 Feb, 2024, EPW

### Chapter:

7 - Politics and Society

C-4 Politics and Society

### Perception and Definition



- In India, lobbying carries a stigma, often equated with undue influence on decision-making, contrasting sharply with more positive perceptions in many Western democracies.
  - [This perception aligns with "cultural relativism", suggesting that ethical and cultural norms surrounding practices like lobbying vary significantly across societies]
- Late Arun Jaitley highlighted lobbying as a persuasive effort aimed at government decisions, suggesting it could be based on valid arguments or other, less transparent incentives.
- The sharp contrast in how lobbying is viewed in India versus the West underscores significant cultural and ethical considerations surrounding the practice.

### Evolution of Lobbying Practices

- The evolution of lobbying in India from blatant corruption to more sophisticated, strategy-driven efforts reflects broader changes in global business practices and ethics.
  - [This evolution can be seen through the lens of "globalization", which emphasizes the worldwide impact of economic and cultural exchanges on local practices, including lobbying]
- India's lobbying practices have been shaped by international standards, such as the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, pushing towards more regulated forms of influence.
- The move towards nuanced advocacy strategies marks a significant shift in the landscape of Indian lobbying, aiming for influence within legal and ethical boundaries.

### Actors in Lobbying

- The Indian lobbying ecosystem includes a wide range of actors from corporate sponsors to legal firms, business conglomerates, and think tanks, each playing unique roles.
- Corporate lobbying often involves promoting specific business interests, sometimes leading to competitive conflicts.
- Law firms contribute significantly to lobbying by leveraging legal expertise and regulatory feedback to shape policy and governance.

### Influence and Strategies

- The perception of politics as a service industry necessitates resource investment, where political funding is viewed as strategic business expenditure.

- Public interest litigation serves as a strategic avenue for lobbying, aiming to influence policy through legal channels.

## Media and Information

- The media plays a complex role in lobbying, both as a tool for disseminating information and as an entity influenced by corporate control.
- The concentration of media ownership poses challenges to unbiased information dissemination, highlighting the need for diversity in media landscapes.
  - *[This situation exemplifies "media hegemony" (Antonio Gramsci), where media ownership and control by dominant groups can shape public perception and discourse]*

## Think Tanks and Intellectual Influence

- Think tanks represent the intellectual dimension of lobbying, offering research-based insights to inform policy and public debate.
- The broad spectrum of think tanks in India enriches policy discussions, contributing to a more informed and nuanced understanding of societal issues.

## Challenge

- The line between ethical lobbying and undue influence remains blurred, reflecting the complex nature of political engagement in India.

## Conclusion

- There's a growing movement towards the professionalization and ethical grounding of lobbying practices in India, signaling a shift towards transparency and accountability.
  - *[This shift is consistent with "rational choice theory" (Gary S. Becker), suggesting that as the costs of unethical lobbying (e.g., reputational damage) outweigh the benefits, actors will choose more ethical approaches]*
- Distinguishing between lobbying for public good versus self-interest is vital for understanding its potential benefits and drawbacks, underscoring the importance of ethical considerations in advocacy efforts.



# The Marching Millions

## An Obloquy for Indian Sociology

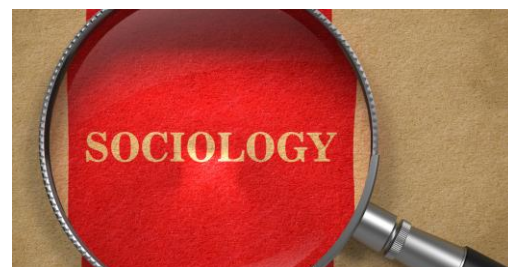
Vol. 59, Issue No. 5, 03 Feb, 2024, EPW

### Chapter:

A-1 Perspectives on the study of Indian society

C-2 Rural and Agrarian transformation in India

C-3 Industrialization and Urbanisation in India



### Educational and Practical Relevance

- Sociology students in India found themselves unprepared for the **migrant crisis during COVID-19**, raising concerns about the **discipline's relevance** and **its effectiveness** in equipping individuals **to understand and predict social changes**.
- This situation prompts **questions about the practical application of sociological education in addressing real-world issues**.

### Shifts in Disciplinary Focus

- Historically, Indian sociology focused on **village studies**, but there has been a **decline in interest** in this area, paralleled by a **lack of engagement with urban-industrial labor** compared to historians and economists.
- Newer areas of study like globalization, sexuality, and minority studies have emerged, yet there's a **diminishing emphasis on economic aspects**, potentially neglecting vital societal dynamics.
- The focus has shifted towards culturally oriented studies, sometimes overlooking traditional sociological themes like agrarian labor, considered outdated.

### Influence of Global Academic Standards

- The increasing influence of diasporic knowledge and the pursuit of international recognition through publication in **globally recognized journals emphasize theoretical trends over local empirical realities**.
- Works produced within India risk being overshadowed unless they receive acknowledgment from the diasporic academic community, leading to a potential undervaluation of home-grown scholarship.

### Criticisms of Theoretical and Methodological Approaches

- Indian sociology faces critique for conservative ethos, an overreliance on structural-functional paradigms, and less receptiveness to Marxism.
- The discipline **relies heavily on binaries**, leading to simplified analyses that may not fully **capture the complexities of social phenomena**.
- There's a **noted divide between "theoretical Brahmins" and "empirical Shudras,"** indicating a **hierarchical bias that values theoretical discourse over empirical investigation**.

## Public Engagement and Policy Involvement

- Despite consistent participation in debates on democracy, secularism, and caste, sociologists have been **criticized for lagging in engaging with communalism and secularism**, where historians and political scientists have been more prominent.
- Sociologists are encouraged to play a more active role in public and policy debates, especially in areas where their expertise is crucial but underutilized, like globalization and liberalization.

## Areas of Neglect and Opportunity for Course Correction

- The historical **disengagement from economic studies has led sociologists towards cultural studies, missing opportunities to contribute to discussions on globalization** dominated by economists.
- The **focus on microstudies**, influenced by social anthropology, has resulted in comfort zones that **may overlook broader societal transformations and contemporary issues**.
- There is a clear need for Indian sociology to revisit and expand its conceptual frameworks, incorporating new empirical data to generate a more nuanced understanding of Indian society.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

## Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code bans polygamy: Is the practice more prevalent among Muslims?

February 11, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

B-5 Systems of Kinship in India

B-6 Religion and Society

C-1 Visions of Social Change in India



### Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Overview

- The Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly passed the UCC Bill, 2024, following a two-day discussion.
- **Objective of the bill is to bring uniformity in personal laws** across communities in Uttarakhand (excluding tribals), covering aspects like marriage, divorce, and inheritance.
- **Key provisions include imposition of monogamy across all communities, extending to Muslims** the rule that neither marriage party may have a living spouse, aligning with the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955. **Muslim personal law previously allowed up to four wives for men.**

### Limitations of Polygamy Data

- **Sources:** Main sources are the decadal census and the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), each with limitations.
- **Census Data:** Does **not directly collect polygamy data**; infers from the marital status disparity between genders. Issues like overseas employment can distort these inferences. The latest census data is from 2011.
- **NFHS Data:** **Offers direct questions about polygamy but samples less than 1% of households.** The latest, NFHS-5 (2019-21), covered about 6.1 lakh households.
- **1974 Study:** The last major **government study** on polygamy, **indicating higher rates among Buddhists, Jains, and Hindus compared to Muslims.**

### Polygamy Data Insights

#### 2011 Census:

- **Marital Status Disparity:** 28.65 crore married men versus 29.3 crore married women in India, hinting at polygamy or overseas employment of men.
- **Religious Discrepancy:** **Highest gap in married populations among Hindus, then Muslims,** with Muslims and Christians showing the greatest discrepancies relative to their population shares.

## POLYGAMY NUMBERS BY COMMUNITY

Census 2011 data on marriages by religion

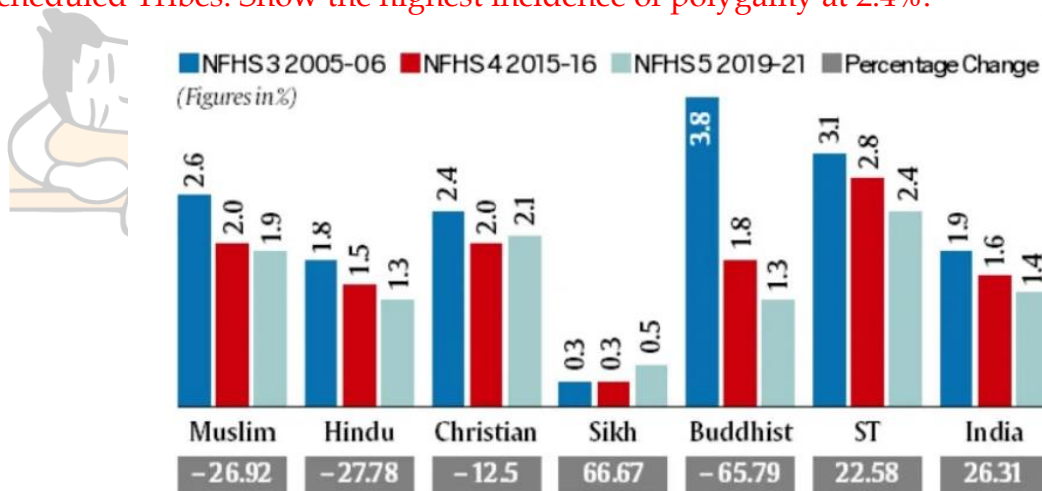
Religion	Married Population			Total Population	Share of Polygamous Population
	Male	Female	Difference		
Hindu	23,35,20,803	23,78,77,097	43,56,294	96,62,57,353	0.45
Muslim	36,06,5,863	37,61,6,038	15,50,175	17,22,45,158	0.90
Christian	62,99,570	65,93,705	2,94,135	2,78,19,588	1.06
Sikh	52,72,175	53,54,042	81,867	2,08,33,116	0.39
India	28,65,07,311	29,30,77,472	65,70,161	121,08,54,977	0.54

Per cent of currently married women who said that their husbands had other wives besides themselves by background characteristics, NFHS-3 to NFHS-5

Polygamy among various religious groups in India.

### NFHS-5 Findings:

- Prevalence by Religion: Highest polygamy rates among Christians (2.1%), Muslims (1.9%), and Hindus (1.3%).
- Scheduled Tribes: Show the highest incidence of polygamy at 2.4%.



Based on a recent study, change in the number of polygynous marriages in India over time.

### Polygyny Trends:

- As per a 2022 study by the International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS) titled 'Polygyny in India: Levels and Differentials'
- Decrease Over Time:** From 1.9% in 2005-06 to 1.4% in 2019-21 across the population.
- Significant Reduction Among Buddhists:** From 3.8% in 2005-06 to 1.3% in 2019-21, a 65.79% decrease.
- Overall Decline:** 26.31% drop in the incidence of polygyny in the total population from 2005-06 to 2019-21.

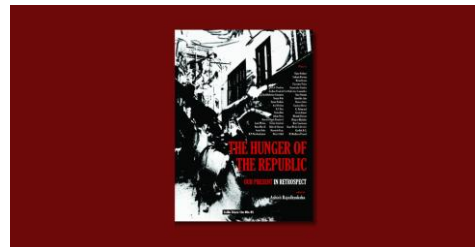
## Shaping Indian Polity

### The Hunger of the Republic: Our Present in Retrospect edited by Ashish Rajadhyaksha

Vol. 59, Issue No. 5, 03 Feb, 2024, EPW

#### Chapter:

#### C-4 Politics and Society



- *The Hunger of the Republic: Our Present in Retrospect*, part of the six-volume series titled *India since the 1990s*, aims at providing a historical frame to the present in a comprehensive manner.
- One of the most striking pieces and also the opening one is **Rajani Kothari's essay, "Democracy: In Search of a Theory,"** an **extract from the author's** 2005 swan song of a volume, *Rethinking Democracy*.
- Kothari argues that the **Indian democracy is characterised by the absence of the "atomistic individual,"** a philosophical-juridical mainstay of the Western tradition, which presents a major challenge to its European counterpart.
- **Kothari argues that plurality/pluralism of social allegiances such as religious, linguistic, or caste is a far better premise for democracy than** the philosophical-existential dead-end of the atomised individual, an altogether abstract construct with a fragile basis in the experiential realm.
- While the **concept of the atomised individual** can be important for legal and financial purposes, it is **not a sufficient basis for a functioning democracy**.
- In this sense, Kothari provided a likely foundation if not a whole edifice for what may be called Indian democracy, but one that in effect seems applicable to democracy anywhere.
- In the editorial introduction, Rajadhyaksha quotes perhaps the most poignant and sweeping **lines from Kothari:**
  - **India is a deviant case in a much more fundamental sense: most threats to democracy in India arise from the sector that promotes modernity.**



## The path towards a pluralist civil society

February 05, 2024, The Hindu



### Chapter:

C-4 Politics and Society

### Western Civil Society:

- The **western tradition of civil society** tended to grant such a **watchdog function**, of counterbalancing the state's drive to monopolise sovereign power, to an **elite public sphere**.
- This **liberal public sphere** as described by Jürgen Habermas, comprises educated middle **classes** engaged in rational discourse focused on autonomy and self-interest.

### Indian Elite Civil Society:

- The **English-speaking domain**, particularly in journalism and activism, mirrors Western elite-led discourse.
- Normative assumptions favor traditional elites' hold over the public sphere, often **characterized by male, upper-class, and dominant caste membership**.
  - *[This reflects the views of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu on social capital and power dynamics, where the elite's cultural capital allows them to maintain their status and influence over the public sphere]*
- Despite this elite dominance, there has been **limited action against threats to constitutional governance**.

### Indian Non-Elite Civil Society:

- More **forceful democratic claims** to the mantle of popular sovereignty have emanated **from** what we can term as the **non-elite counter-sphere**.
  - *[This dynamic can be seen through "counter-publics" (Nancy Fraser), which are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses]*
- This is the **counter sphere of 'organisations and movements'**: social movements, farmers and labour groups, human rights activists, subaltern caste and tribal movements.
- Examples include various social movements such as the **Una agitation by Dalits** against caste-based violence; the **Pathalgadi movement of tribals** in Jharkhand; the **farmers' movements** of Punjab and Haryana; and the nation-wide protests by **Muslims (led by women)** against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

### Treatment of Non-Elite Civil Society:

- The **liberal public sphere** may empathize with non-elite movements but tends to **view them as subordinate or emotional rather than rational**.
  - *[This perception aligns with Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, where the state and elite class maintain control by setting societal norms that marginalize alternative viewpoints or movements]*



- Downplaying these movements risks losing their transformative democratic potential.

## Building a Pluralist Civil Society

- Progressive civil society in India must be pluralistic, based on equal participation of all communities.
- Viewing any community as inferior leads to unchecked pride and undermines pluralism.
- **Pluralist society requires introspective dialogue**, not merely to debate but to understand the 'other'.
- **Recognizing and engaging with the perspectives and concerns of diverse groups** is key to building solidarity.
- **This is essential to avoid a chauvinistic civil society that lacks self-knowledge and becomes an enabler of authoritarian tendencies in the state.**



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

## Population growth committee: Move beyond Emergency-era fears

February 6, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

#### C-6 Population Dynamics

### Population Growth Committee



- In Nirmala Sitharaman's budget speech for the year 2024, she announced the creation of a committee to study India's population growth.
- To assess and ensure India's preparedness for the demographic aspects of the 'Viksit Bharat' vision by 2047.

### Priorities and Policy Measures

#### Priority 1: Anticipating the Workforce of 2047

- The age composition is projected to shift, with older workers becoming more prevalent by 2047.
- Today 33 per cent of the population is aged 20-29, while 23 per cent of the population is aged 40-59.
- But in 2047, the proportion of the younger population will decrease, and the proportion of older working ages will increase, with each forming about 28 per cent of the population.
- **Policy Measures:** Focus on reskilling and continuous education to prepare the current and future workforce for an economy that is increasingly driven by technology.

#### Priority 2: Regional Demographic Disparities

- **Dependency burden**, defined as the number of individuals ages 15-59 supporting children under 15 and older population above 60, will vary dramatically between states.
- For example, demographer P.M. Kulkarni estimates that in 2021, in Bihar, 151 working-age adults supported 100 dependents, while in Tamil Nadu, 189 adults supported the same population; this will flip with the worker-to-dependent ratio changing to 201 in Bihar and 132 in Tamil Nadu by 2051.
- Different regions in India are experiencing demographic changes at diverse rates, with southern states leading in fertility decline.
- The ratio of working-age adults to dependents will shift dramatically, with states like Bihar and Tamil Nadu experiencing opposite trends.
- **Policy Measures:** Address the need to bolster productivity in states traditionally viewed as demographic laggards through focused investments and resource allocation. This will be the challenge that the newly formed 16th Finance Commission will face as it decides on inter-state allocations.

#### Priority 3: Women in the Workforce

- Decreased fertility has led to reduced child care burdens, but this has not translated into higher female labor force participation.

- **Sonalde Desai's analysis** of National Family Health Survey data, undertaken **with sociologist Sojin Yu**, shows that in 1993, **an average woman spent about 14 years caring for children under age five**, while that **number dropped to eight years in 2021**.
- However, time freed up from childcare has not been utilised in increased participation in the workforce.
- **Policy Measures:** Enhance labor market accessibility for women by improving child care services, such as through innovative combinations of Anganwadi centers and MGNREGA.

#### Priority 4: Elderly Independence

- With fewer children to support them, the elderly will need mechanisms to maintain self-sufficiency.
- **Policy Measures:** Consider **increasing retirement age**, enhancing **pension schemes**, and creating options for the elderly to liquidate assets like land or homes.

#### What Should Be The Demographic Strategy?

- **Gradual Fertility Decline:** Encourage a natural decline in fertility rates rather than imposing harsh restrictions.
- **Societal and Economic Adaptation:** Prepare for and adapt to the demographic evolution in a way that ensures societal well-being and economic vitality.
- **Collaborative Effort:** Require the expertise of various fields such as demography, economy, sociology, and public policy to inform comprehensive strategies.
- **Integration with Finance Commission:** Ensure that the committee's findings and recommendations are integrated with the 16th Finance Commission's fiscal planning to influence government spending effectively.

## Multidimensional poverty: meaning, numbers

February 4, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

### C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation

### Overview

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated in her interim budget speech that 25 crore Indians have been lifted from multidimensional poverty over the past decade. This achievement was credited to the government's policy, 'Sabka ka Saath'.



Traditionally, poverty is calculated based either on income levels or, if income data are not available, on expenditure levels. The so-called "poverty lines" are actually expenditure levels that are considered minimum enough for someone to be called poor.

### Basis for Assessment

- Source: Discussion paper by NITI Aayog, "Multidimensional Poverty in India Since 2005-06".
- Contributors: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Policy and Human Development Initiative (OPHI).

### Statistics:

- Multidimensional poverty decreased from 29.17% in 2013-14 to 11.28% in 2022-23.
- Approx. 24.82 crore individuals escaped poverty in this period.

### State-wise leading results:

- Uttar Pradesh: 5.94 crore people.
- Bihar: 3.77 crore people.
- Madhya Pradesh: 2.30 crore people.
- Time Frame: Data reflects the last nine years, aligning with the duration of the BJP-led government.

### Escaped Multidimensional Poverty (2013-14-2022-23)

	Estimated in lakh
Bihar	377.09
Madhya Pradesh	230.00
Maharashtra	159.07
Odisha	102.78
Rajasthan	187.12
Uttar Pradesh	593.69
West Bengal	172.18
<b>INDIA</b>	<b>2,482.16</b>

## Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

- Traditional Poverty Metrics: Based on income or expenditure levels.
- MPI Approach: Uses a set of 10 indicators across three dimensions, each weighted equally:

### Health:

- Nutrition.
- Child and adolescent mortality.

### Education:

- Years of schooling.
- School attendance.

### Standard of Living:

- Housing quality.
- Household assets.
- Cooking fuel type.
- Access to sanitation, drinking water, electricity.

### Indian MPI Adjustments:

- Addition of maternal health (health dimension).
- Inclusion of bank accounts (standard of living dimension).
- Rationale: To better reflect India's national priorities.

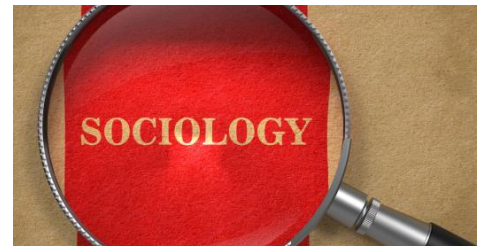
## COVID-19 Cuts in Sociology of South Asia

Vol. 59, Issue No. 9, 02 Mar, 2024, EPW

### Chapter:

1 - Sociology - The Discipline

3 - Research Methods and Analysis



### Silos in Sociology

- Sociology, much like the medical field, has developed into a discipline with **clearly defined subdisciplines**, each possessing its own unique boundaries and areas of expertise.
- This **compartmentalization** has led to the formation of 'silos' within the field, where knowledge and research are segmented similar to how a cardiologist and a nephrologist might specialize in their respective fields.

### The Drawbacks of Silos

- While specialization allows for depth of knowledge, it also poses challenges to the holistic understanding of sociological issues.
- The segmentation of sociology into subdisciplines such as caste, gender, and tribe can **limit interdisciplinary dialogue** and **reduce the potential for a comprehensive understanding of social phenomena**.
- This is especially problematic when different subdisciplines need to intersect, as they often do in discussions on social inequality.
- *[From Systems Theory's perspective Silos in sociology can prevent the system from adapting or integrating new information across different subsystems, hindering the discipline's ability to respond to new social challenges.]*

### Intersectionality in Sociology

- Despite the silos, there are instances, such as seminars on social inequality, where sociologists from various subdisciplines come together and recognize the importance of intersectionality.
- However, the integration of **intersectionality** into regular sociological practice **remains limited** due to the rigid intellectual and methodological boundaries that exist within the discipline.
- *[The concept of intersectionality, introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is crucial here, stressing that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage sometimes compound themselves. This concept creates a methodological framework to understand how systemic injustice and social inequality occur on a multidimensional basis.]*

### Critique of the Current Expertise Model

- The current model of expertise within sociology is often critiqued for being more about gatekeeping than advancing human interests.
- There's a **need for a more open and integrated approach** that allows for the **cross-pollination of ideas across different areas** of sociology **to better serve societal needs**.



- *[Thomas Kuhn's idea of paradigm shifts in scientific fields offers a valuable lens to understand these criticisms. It suggests that significant developments in sociology may require shifting the conventional frameworks to new models that better address contemporary social issues.]*

## Challenges Posed by Silos

- The creation of silos can lead to **intellectual insecurities among sociologists**, who may fear crossing the boundaries of their specialized domains.
- This fear can hinder the development of a more integrated approach to studying complex social issues.
- *[Michel Foucault's theory of power/knowledge can elucidate how disciplinary boundaries act as power structures that define what is legitimate knowledge, potentially stifling innovation and interdisciplinary research within sociology.]*

## Conclusion: Breaking Away from Silos

- The reality of the **social world is complex and interconnected**, often requiring a **multidimensional approach** to fully understand and address societal issues.
- To foster a more dynamic and responsive sociology, there is **a need for the discipline to move beyond silos** and embrace a more pluralistic and integrated approach.
- This would involve encouraging sociologists to engage with a variety of sociological themes and issues beyond their specialized areas, thereby enhancing the discipline's ability to address the complex and intertwined challenges of contemporary society.

## Breaking Down the Pink Tax

Vol. 59, Issue No. 11, 16 Mar, 2024, EPW

### Chapter:

#### 5 - Stratification and Mobility



### What is Pink Tax?

- **Definition:** The "pink tax" refers to the **extra cost that products for women, often identical or very similar to men's products, frequently carry**. This cost differential is seen as **a form of gender-based price discrimination**.
- **Characteristics:** Products targeted towards women, like razors and personal care items, are priced higher solely due to their marketing towards women, often without significant differences in production costs.

### Types of Pink Tax

- **Consumer Goods:** Everyday products such as toiletries, razors, and skincare items often cost more for women than for men. These products **may only differ in color or fragrance**.
- **Services:** Gender-based pricing disparities are evident in services such as dry cleaning and personal care services like haircuts and beauty treatments, where women often pay more for the same service.
- **Healthcare and Insurance:** Women face higher costs in healthcare, **particularly in areas like reproductive health**. Historically, health insurance premiums were also higher for women than for men.
- **Safety Costs:** Women often incur additional costs ensuring personal safety and managing subsistence. For instance, **women may pay more for transportation options that feel safer or for products like pepper spray**.
- **Apparel and Accessories:** Women's clothing and accessories frequently have higher price tags compared to men's items of similar style and quality.
- **Automotive Services:** Women are sometimes charged more for the same automotive services and products, and may also face higher interest rates on auto loans.
- *[This pricing strategy exemplifies the Commodification of Gender, where gender identities are commercialized to generate profit, reflecting a Marxist feminist critique of how capitalism exploits gender differences.]*

### Factors that lead to Pink Tax

- **Willingness to Pay:** Research suggests that women are often willing to pay more for products that they perceive as specifically designed for them, particularly in categories like beauty and personal care. This perceived value added by gender-specific design or marketing allows companies to set higher price points.
- **Social Norms and Expectations:** Societal expectations about gender roles significantly contribute to the pink tax. These norms dictate that women should prioritize their appearance and personal care, which creates a demand for a wide array of beauty and hygiene products specifically marketed to women.

The increased demand allows companies to charge more for these products.

- **Inelastic Demand for Certain Goods:** Products that are seen as necessities for women, such as **menstrual hygiene products**, have an inelastic demand, meaning women will buy them regardless of price increases. This lack of sensitivity to price changes gives manufacturers and retailers the leeway to charge more.
- **Economic Exploitation of Gender Stereotypes:** Companies exploit gender stereotypes for economic gain. **By tapping into culturally ingrained perceptions—such as the idea that women should have soft skin or appear youthful—**companies create and sell a wide range of gender-specific products at a premium.
- **Regulatory Gaps:** The absence of strict regulations that prevent gender-based pricing allows businesses to continue this practice without legal repercussions. Few regions have laws specifically prohibiting charging different prices for similar men's and women's products.

## Implication of Pink Tax

- **Economic Burden:** The pink tax increases financial strain on women, who already earn less on average than men, **contributing to a larger gender wealth gap**.

*[The pink tax contributes to the Feminization of Poverty, a concept introduced by Pearce, describing the economic disadvantage women face due to lower income and higher spending on gender-targeted products.]*

- **Social Inequality:** By reinforcing gender stereotypes that suggest women should pay more for personal care and appearance, the **pink tax perpetuates social norms that undervalue women's economic contributions**.

*[The pink tax can also be viewed as a form of Pierre Bourdieu's Symbolic Violence where societal norms and gender expectations subtly coerce women into paying more for gendered products, reinforcing economic and gender disparities.]*

- **Barrier to Gender Equality:** The financial burden imposed by the **pink tax can limit women's access to certain goods, services, and opportunities**, hindering progress toward gender equality.
- **Increased Advocacy and Policy Change:** Recognition of the pink tax has led to advocacy **for more equitable pricing practices and policies** that address gender-based economic discrimination.

## Bridging the Gap

- **Mandating Public Disclosure:** Enforcing businesses to publicly disclose non-compliance with fair pricing standards can deter discriminatory pricing practices and promote transparency.
- **Collaboration with Consumer Protection Organizations:** Leveraging the expertise of these organizations can enhance the monitoring, reporting, and redressing of gender-based price discrimination.
- **Subsidies and Regulations:** Providing subsidies for manufacturing essentials (e.g., rubber and glue for sanitary pads) to reduce production costs and lower retail prices. Establishing an **independent regulatory authority** to ensure fair pricing and quality standards.

- **Educational Campaigns:** Enhancing awareness among women about gender-based price discrimination is crucial. This can empower them to make informed choices and challenge unfair pricing.
- **Encouraging Gender-Neutral Products:** Promoting **unisex products** can help eliminate gender-based pricing disparities, challenge stereotypes, and create a more inclusive marketplace.
- **Legislative and Policy Changes:** Implementing laws and policies that specifically address and **penalize gender-based pricing**.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

## Digital Capital and Segregated Schooling

Vol. 59, Issue No. 11, 16 Mar, 2024, EPW

### Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

10 Social Change in Modern Society

C-1 Visions of Social Change in India



### What is Digital Capital

- Digital Capital is defined as the "accumulation of digital competencies and digital technology."
- It represents a crucial asset for advancing in a meritocratic society by enabling individuals to access, utilize, and benefit from digital resources and skills.

### Types of Digital Capital

- **Embodied Digital Capital:** Refers to internalized skills, dispositions, motivation, interests, expectations, and past experiences that form part of an individual's habitus.
- **Objectified Digital Capital:** Represents the materialized form of digital resources, such as equipment and devices, which largely depend on one's economic status.

### Status of Digital Divide

- The Global Education Monitoring report (UNESCO 2023) points out how the unequal distribution of digital resources along region, ethnicity, caste, and race has been one of the glaring aspects of this digital expansion.
- The digital divide in India is profound, with discrepancies evident across regions, castes, and genders.
- This divide affects access to digital education and perpetuates existing socio-economic inequalities.
- Disparities in digital access are linked to the social and economic backgrounds of learners, influencing their ability to participate effectively in digital education.

### Digitally Segregated Schools

- **Digital Access in Schools:** Private schools tend to be well-equipped with digital technologies, whereas public schools lag significantly, often lacking basic digital infrastructure.
- **Impact of Social Backgrounds:** The caste system and economic disparities influence school enrollment, with higher caste and economically better-off students more likely to attend digitally equipped private schools. This creates a new form of educational segregation based on digital access.

### Relation between Different Capitals (Economic, Social, Cultural, and Digital)

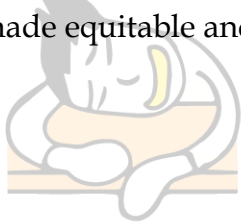
- **Interconnection of Capitals:** Drawing from Bourdieu's theory of capitals, digital capital interacts with economic, social, and cultural capitals, influencing and being influenced by each.

The possession of **economic capital** (like money and assets) **facilitates access to digital capital** (such as the latest technology and internet access), **which in turn can enhance one's social and cultural capital** by providing broader social connections and cultural competencies.

- **Mutual Reinforcement:** The ability to utilize digital technologies (digital capital) can lead to enhanced social connections (social capital) and improved access to cultural goods and knowledge (cultural capital). Conversely, those with substantial social and cultural capital are better positioned to acquire and benefit from digital technologies.
- **Impact on Socio-Economic Mobility:** The synergy between these forms of capital can significantly influence an individual's socio-economic mobility. For instance, in a stratified society like India, where social and economic disparities are marked by caste and class, the accumulation of digital capital by the privileged can exacerbate existing inequalities, leaving those without digital proficiency further marginalized.

## Conclusion

- **Need for Comprehensive Solutions:** Addressing the digital divide requires **multi-faceted solutions** that include improving **digital infrastructure in public schools**, ensuring **affordable access to digital resources**, and **promoting digital literacy across all social groups**.
- **Potential of Digital Education:** Properly leveraged, digital education can serve as a powerful tool to break down long-standing barriers in education, provided that access is made equitable and inclusive.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers



## This Women's Day, let's talk about masculinity

March 8, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

10 Social Change in Modern Society

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation



### Introduction: Observations on Women's Day

- During Women's Day, there is often superficial support for women that does not challenge traditional and restrictive roles, pointing to a need for a genuine embrace of feminist principles to transform societal institutions in India.

### Concept of Feminizing Society

- Feminizing society involves moving beyond simply increasing the number of women in power. It **requires changing institutional paradigms from those focused-on glory and power to those emphasizing care and deliberative empathy.**
- A feminized society prioritizes **diversity, emotional literacy, and the ability to recognize and address one's privilege** in decision-making roles.

### Michele Lamont's Contributions

- Sociologist Michele Lamont** discusses the importance of recognition over stigmatization in her book, *"Seeing Others: How to Redefine Worth in a Divided World."*
- Lamont **identifies "recognition gaps"** as disparities in perceived worth and cultural membership between different groups in society, **exacerbated by societal emphasis on competitiveness and self-reliance.**
- Her work suggests that institutions can act as buffers that provide recognition to stigmatized groups, challenging existing norms of socioeconomic evaluation.

### Stigmatization in India

- Stigmatization is prevalent in India, affecting how women and minorities are viewed and treated, particularly in legal judgments and societal interactions.
- Calls for affirmative action** emphasize the need for **women from historically marginalized communities** to be recognized **as primary beneficiaries.**
- [Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of "Intersectionality" is critical in understanding how various forms of inequality (such as race, gender, and class) intersect, affecting marginalized groups, particularly in the context of affirmative action.]*

### Role of Education

- Feminizing institutions involves **educating children and youth to handle differences and recognize one another's value,** particularly among elite groups.
- Feminists point out the **need for men to develop capacities to understand and empathize with women,** similar to how women have traditionally learned to interact with men.

## Valuing Care in Society

- **Nel Noddings, a scholar of morality, emphasizes that caring involves moving away from self-centeredness.**
- **A feminized society would value care work,** recognizing the social contribution of activities often undertaken without compensation.
- Statistics highlight that Indian women spend significantly more time on unpaid caregiving activities compared to men, impacting their economic participation.
- *[This can be understood using Arlie Hochschild's concept of Emotional Labour a concept that refers to the management of emotions to fulfill the emotional requirements of a job, like caregiving, which is often undervalued and uncompensated.]*

## Economic and Policy Recommendations

- **Policies should support the care economy** by adequately compensating care workers, valuing social work, and providing economic incentives and support to women, especially during maternity.
- Men rarely face the harsh binary between career and care that women experience, pointing to the need for policies that ease this trade-off.

## Safety and Social Security

- **A feminized society would ensure safety and social security for all,** reflecting zero tolerance for neglect or abuse.
- The current low percentage of women in the police force and the lack of social security for many women workers highlight areas for improvement.
- **Advocacy for a universal system of economic assurance** and risk insurance for those in need as an essential state function.

## Conclusion: Beyond Tokenism

- True feminization of society involves moving beyond tokenistic empowerment to fostering a culture of empathy and care.
- Addressing the crisis of masculinity and its impact on societal structures through feminist principles can lead to more substantive equality and empowerment.

## Employment Status of Digital Platform Workers

Vol. 59, Issue No. 9, 02 Mar, 2024, EPW

### Chapter:

6 - Works and Economic Life

C-3 Industrialization and Urbanisation in India



### Overview of Gig Economy

- **Triangular Relationship:** The gig economy is characterized by interactions among:
  - i. **Consumers:** Those who avail specific services.
  - ii. **Platform-based Gig Workers:** Individuals paid for the service rendered.
  - iii. **Aggregators:** Entities connecting consumers to workers, transforming modern economies.

*[This model exemplifies the shift towards a Network Society (Manuel Castells) where digital connectivity is central to economic and social interactions.]*

### Impact and Growth:

- **Global Expansion:** According to the International Labour Organization (ILO 2021), digital labor platforms have increased fivefold in the last decade.
- **Significance:** Digital platforms are pivotal in transforming the nature of work, necessitating international policy dialogue (ILO 2021 Report).
- *[Illustrates how digital platforms contribute to the Globalization of labor, expanding markets and labor interactions beyond traditional geographic and economic boundaries.]*

### Indian Context

- **Emergence and Popularity:** New to India, boosted by platforms like Ola, Zomato, Swiggy, and Urban Company.
- **Regulatory Challenges:**
- **Inadequate Laws:** Existing labor legislation fails to protect gig and platform workers' rights comprehensively.
- **Lack of Policy Framework:** Absence of national policy or grievance mechanisms for these workers.
- **Self-Identification:** Some workers prefer identifying as self-employed for flexibility and income potential.

*[The Gig Workers can be related to Guy Standing's concept of Precariat which refers to a socio-economic group characterized by three peculiar traits: its representatives are not guaranteed secure jobs; apart from receiving immediate payment for their labor, they do not receive any supplementary social guarantees in the form of pensions or unemployment benefits; people belonging to this class are often deprived of certain civil rights enjoyed by other members of society]*

## Legal Framework and Definitions

- **Code of Social Security (CSS) 2020:** Provides social security for gig and platform workers but lacks clarity on the precise definition and rights of such workers.

### Definitions under CSS 2020:

- **Gig Worker (Section 2[35]):** A person performing work or participating in a work arrangement, earning outside traditional employer-employee relationships.
- **Platform Worker (Section 2[61]):** Engages in platform work as defined by the government.
- **Platform Work (Section 2[60]):** A work arrangement outside traditional employer-employee relationships, facilitated by platforms.
- **Aggregator (Section 2[2]):** A digital intermediary or marketplace for buyers and service providers.

### Status of Gig Workers Globally

- **Diverse Classifications:** Gig workers are classified differently across countries— as workers, employees, contractors, or freelancers based on local judicial rulings.
- **Workers or employees** in countries like the UK, France, and parts of the US.
- Considered **contractors or freelancers** in Brazil, Australia, Japan, and other countries.
- Legal definitions affect rights, benefits, and social securities available to gig workers.

*[This variation in classification reflects the idea of Labor Market Segmentation which refers to the division of the labor market according to a principle such as occupation, geography and industry. Where different policies and economic conditions influence worker rights and status.]*

### Statistical Insights

- **Workforce Size:** Estimated 7.7 million workers in India's gig economy as of 2020-21, expected to grow to 23.5 million by 2029-30 (NITI Aayog 2022).
- **Demographics:** Predominantly younger workforce with an average age of 27 in delivery and 33 in transport sectors.

### Emerging Issues and Recommendations

- **Data Compilation:** Need for accurate data on gig and platform workers to inform policies and protections.
- **Definitional Clarity:** Need for clear definitions of gig workers, platform workers, and their work environments.
- **Regulatory Challenges:** The need for better regulation and policy-making to address the ambiguous legal status of gig workers.
- **Consumer Protection:** How E-Commerce Rules 2020 can safeguard platform-based gig workers' interests.

### Recommendations

- **Regulatory Oversight:** Enhance enforcement mechanisms to ensure fair pricing and labor practices.

- **Data Collection:** Call for comprehensive data collection to better understand the gig workforce and tailor policies accordingly.
- **Legal Status and Protections:** Clarify the legal status of gig workers to ensure adequate social security and labor rights.

## Conclusion

- The gig economy in India encapsulates a significant segment of the workforce, necessitating targeted policy interventions to safeguard these workers' rights and ensure fair treatment.
- The evolving legal discussions and impending court decisions will significantly influence the future regulatory landscape for gig and platform workers in India.





## If democracy is to survive the age of AI, it must be updated

March 25, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

7 - Politics and Society

10 - Social Change in Modern Society

C-4 Politics and Society

### Introduction



- In **2024-2025**, over 60 countries will hold general or presidential elections during a **period marked by a decline in democratic governance, noted by Freedom House for the 19th consecutive year.**
- This period also highlights political disillusionment and public apathy, prompting global watchdogs and civil societies to revise safeguards and establish independent platforms for media and information dissemination.

### Trust in Government

- A **2021 OECD report** titled “**Building Trust to Reinforce Democracy**” reveals that **only about 40% of people trust their national governments**, echoing concerns from the Freedom House report.

### Theoretical Perspectives on Democracy and Role of AI

- **Ben Garfinkel's Analysis:** **Questions the longevity of democracy as a political system**, noting its rarity over five millennia and its spread only in the last two centuries. Garfinkel credits industrialization and the Enlightenment for aligning political and economic interests across societal strata, fostering democratic conditions. He **poses whether democracy can endure the transition from industrialization to widespread automation.**
- **Mark Coeckelbergh's Concerns:** Argues that **AI endangers democracy by diminishing citizens' epistemic agency**—the ability to know and think independently. **AI's role in spreading fake news and manipulating data can undermine informed citizenship**, essential for democracy.
- **Theodore Lechterman's View:** Discusses the need to rejustify democracy in the age of AI, focusing on the essential democratic process of decision-making. He **emphasizes reevaluating who makes decisions and how in the technocratic and digital age.**

### Policy Responses and Educational Interventions

- To counteract AI's threats to democracy, there is a critical need for policies that regulate technology use and education reforms that enhance digital literacy and critical thinking.

### Conclusion

- Democracy is dynamic and continually evolving in response to socio-economic and technological changes. The upcoming elections across numerous countries represent a crucial time for rethinking democratic processes and structures.
- The ongoing challenge is to maintain effective collective decision-making and combat the rise of populism and authoritarian tendencies, ensuring democracy adapts effectively in the age of AI.



## Green jobs and the problem of gender disparity

March 06, 2024, The Hindu

### Chapter:

C-3 - Industrialization and Urbanisation in India

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation

### Overview of Gender Equity in Green Jobs Transition in India:



- **Projected Growth:** India's transition to low-carbon development could create approximately 35 million green jobs by 2047, defined as “decent jobs that contribute to environmental preservation or restoration” by the International Labour Organization.
- **Sector Distribution:** These roles are spread across sectors such as manufacturing, construction, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and automobiles, traditionally showing lower female representation.
- **Current Workforce Disparities:** Despite significant growth in renewable energy capacity from 2015 to 2021, women only accounted for 11% of workers in the solar rooftop sector. Furthermore, women are predominantly employed in industries such as apparel, textiles, leather, food, and tobacco, while men dominate 85% of the workforce in sectors like infrastructure and manufacturing.
- *[Reflects Gendered Labor Markets which refers to the idea as to how labor markets are structured in ways that reinforce gender disparities and maintain women in low-wage and less valued sectors.]*

### Challenges and Limitations for Women in Green Jobs:

- **Training and Development Disparities:** A 2023 study by the Skill Council for Green Jobs revealed 85% of green skills training was given to men, and over 90% of women believed social norms limited their training opportunities.
- **Restrictive Social Norms:** Women face challenges due to societal beliefs about their unsuitability for technical roles, safety concerns, lower STEM representation, and familial constraints.
- **Educational and Industry Representation:** Despite women making up 42.7% of all STEM graduates, they only represent 30.8% in sectors crucial for green transition such as engineering, manufacturing, and construction.

*[Reflects Social Role Theory given by Alice Eagly. This theory suggests that gender roles are culturally and socially constructed. Prescriptive stereotypes about 'appropriate' female behaviour influence the types of careers women pursue and are encouraged to pursue, affecting their representation in STEM fields.]*

### Empowerment and Inclusivity Initiatives:

- **Supportive Programs:** Implementation of hands-on learning, mentorship, scholarships, financial assistance, and awareness campaigns are crucial to empower women in green job sectors.
- **Financial Policies:** Development of gender-focused financial policies and products is necessary to support women entrepreneurs in the green market.

- **Business Role:** Businesses must tackle gender stereotypes and biases, ensuring equitable job opportunities and fostering an inclusive environment.
- *[Suggests a need for Feminist Economics which advocates for recognizing the economic contributions of women and the importance of addressing gender disparities through structural changes in policy and corporate practices]*

### Conclusion:

- Global Action: At COP 28, the launch of the 'Gender-Responsive Just Transitions and Climate Action Partnership' highlighted the need for improved data, targeted finance, and skill development to promote inclusivity in green transitions.
- Strategic Focus: These global efforts align with the need to address and overcome gender disparities within India's green job sector, ensuring women can fully benefit from emerging opportunities in a low-carbon economy.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

## Ageism, Euthanasia, and Crimes against the Elderly

Vol. 59, Issue No. 9, 02 Mar, 2024, EPW

### Chapter:

C-6 Population Dynamics



### Introduction

- The discussion centers around the themes of ageism, the ethical and legal complexities of euthanasia, and the increasing incidents of crimes against the elderly in India.

### Geronticide and Senicide

- Geronticide (Euthanasia):** The contemplation by the elderly especially **octogenarian** of **ending their lives due to dependence and loss of self-respect**.

*[Howard Becker's Labeling theory can be used to explain how ageism labels the elderly as less capable or burdensome, impacting their social identity and self-concept.]*

- Senicide:** Defined as "the killing of elderly people," has manifested as a concerning issue, particularly in some parts of Tamil Nadu, where the age-old ritualistic practice of Thalaikoothal prevails.

*[This can be seen as a form of Structural Violence where social structures harm or disadvantage individuals by preventing them from meeting their basic needs.]*

### Motivations Behind Geronticide or Senicide

- Economic burdens and societal pressures** often drive the killing of elderly people.
- In some cases, motives include children killing elderly parents to **gain control of ancestral properties**, a trend observed across various social strata.

### Legal Context

- Constitutional Rights:** **Article 21** of the Indian Constitution guarantees the **right to life** but does not include the right to die.
- Euthanasia:** India **allows passive euthanasia** under strict conditions, clarified in the case of Aruna Ramchandra Shanbaug v Union of India.
- Future Concerns:** With the projected increase in the elderly population, the legalization of euthanasia for the elderly raises potential issues of **coercion by family members**.
- [This can be understood from the perspective of Anomie (Émile Durkheim), a state of normlessness where societal norms fail to control the behavior of individuals, leading to extreme measures like geronticide for economic gain.]*

### Societal Attitudes and Ageism

- Negative Perceptions:** Elderly individuals are often **seen as burdens** by their families and society, which **affects their treatment and quality of life**.
- Need for Change:** It's crucial to challenge and change societal attitudes towards aging to ensure the elderly are not viewed merely as burdens but as valued members of society.

## Conclusion

- There is a need for re-evaluating societal views on aging and the elderly.
- A shift in perception is required towards providing a supportive and compassionate environment for the elderly, aligning with broader societal and ethical standards.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

## Express View on India's falling fertility rate: A wake-up call

March 29, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

C-6 Population Dynamics



### Introduction: Overview of Demographic Changes

- **Fertility Trends:** According to a **Lancet report**, India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is projected to fall to 1.29 by 2050, indicating fewer children per woman.
- **Aging Population:** The UN Population Fund's (UNPF) **India Aging Report** highlights a significant increase in the **elderly population**, expecting a rise from 149 million in 2022 to 347 million by 2050.
- **Demographic Shift:** By 2050, one in five persons in India will be above the age of 60.
- *[Demographic Transition Theory explains the decline in fertility and mortality rates as a result of a country's development from a pre-industrial to an industrialized economic system.]*

### Implications of Demographic Changes

- **Economic Considerations:** The report suggests a looming **end to India's demographic dividend**, with the working-age population set to peak between the late 2030s and early 2040s.
- **Comparison with Global Trends:** Reflecting on **China's experience**, where economic growth coincided with a dominant working-age population, India is warned of similar demographic and economic changes. China saw its TFR drop and its working-age population contract significantly post-peak.

### Challenges Posed by Demographic Transition

- **Economic Growth and Workforce Trends:** As India approaches a demographic transition similar to that experienced by China, there is an urgent **need to maximize the current demographic dividend**.
- **Skill Development and Employment:** Critical investments are required in skill enhancement and job creation outside of agriculture to avoid an over-dependence on the low-paid informal sector.
- **Healthcare and Social Security:** With an aging population, there is a pressing need to develop adequate social security and healthcare systems to support the elderly.
- **Regional Variations:** The demographic shifts vary significantly across different regions in India, with parts of South and West India aging faster than the North, presenting unique regional challenges for policymakers.

### Strategies for Addressing the Transition

- **Utilizing Current Demographic Dividend:** Like China in the late 1980s to early 2000s, India should capitalize on its current demographic structure **to strengthen economic foundations**.

- **Enhancing Skill Sets:** Address skill deficits promptly to prepare for future shifts in the labor market and ensure competitiveness in the global knowledge economy.
- **Preparing for an Aging Society:** Develop strategies to effectively **use the skills of the elderly population while ensuring they have sufficient social and healthcare support.**

### Conclusion:

- Policymakers must understand and prepare for demographic changes in all their dimensions to mitigate potential socio-economic challenges.
- This includes planning for diverse regional impacts and ensuring that the aging population can contribute to and benefit from societal developments.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers



## Express View on World Inequality Lab report: The unlevel field

March 25, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

### C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation



### Introduction

- **Report:** "Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj." by **World Inequality Lab**, a Paris-based research organisation.
- **Author:** Four authors including **Thomas Piketty**.
- **Main Findings:** The report suggests that **economic inequality in India has significantly increased** since the early 2000s, **surpassing inequality levels of the British Raj period**.

### Methodology Used in the Study

- **Data Sources:** Combines national income accounts, wealth aggregates, tax tabulations, billionaire rankings, rich lists, and surveys on income, consumption, and wealth.
- **Time Frame:** Creates data series from 1922 for income inequality and from 1961 for wealth inequality.

### Key Findings

#### Income Inequality:

- In **2022-23, 22.6% of India's national income was held by the top 1%**.
- This level is the highest recorded since 1922 and surpasses levels during the colonial inter-war period.
- Globally, **India's top 1% income share is among the highest**, comparable only to a few countries like Peru and Yemen.

#### Wealth Inequality:

- In 2022-23, the top 1% held 40.1% of wealth, the highest since data collection began.
- Wealth concentration is notably severe even within the top 1%.
- The report ends with a **warning** about the sustainability of such high levels of inequality, suggesting **potential risks of major social and political upheaval if current trends continue**.

### Policy Recommendations

- The authors suggest policy interventions such as imposing a **super tax on Indian billionaires and multimillionaires** and **restructuring the tax schedule to include both income and wealth**.

### Concerns about Data Quality

- The authors acknowledge that their estimates likely represent a "lower bound" of actual inequality levels due to the poor quality of economic data in India, which has been declining recently.

## Criticism

- Economists like Surjit Bhalla and Karan Bhasin contest these findings, citing the latest consumption expenditure survey that indicates a decline in both urban and rural inequality in India between 2011-12 and 2022-23.
- This discrepancy underscores the need for deeper inquiry and broader debate on economic inequality in India.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

## World Inequality Lab report on India fails to capture the country's economic reality

March 28, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation

### Major Criticisms of the World Inequality Lab's Report on India's Inequality

#### Methodological Concerns:

- The report admits the data used is not directly observed but inferred, leading to questions about the accuracy and validity of the findings.
- Estimations of income distribution are problematic in countries without official income surveys, as India has not conducted such surveys.

#### Historical Data Revisions:

- Significant revisions of historical data by the authors, such as increasing the top 1% income share for the same year by large margins decades later, challenge the reliability of the data.
- Example: The top 1% income share in India for 1999 was revised from 9% to 21% over the years, a methodologically questionable practice.

#### Comparative Analysis and Global Context:

- Comparisons with other countries like the U.S., where Piketty's earlier work has been questioned for similar methodological issues, suggest a pattern of overstating inequality.
- Critics like Gerald Auten, David Splinter, and researchers like Geloso, Magnes, Moore, and Schlosser have argued that Piketty's methods overstate inequality and use questionable assumptions.

#### Transparency and Reproducibility:

- The report's lack of transparency regarding data sources and the specific methodologies used for revising past estimates raise concerns about reproducibility and academic integrity.

#### Policy Implications and Economic Analysis:

- The report's recommendations, such as imposing a super tax based on these findings, are criticized as being based on speculative and possibly inaccurate data.
- The reliance on inflated and revised data estimates to propose significant policy changes is viewed as problematic and potentially misleading.

#### Academic and Public Engagement:

- The findings have been accepted by some without sufficient critical analysis, possibly because they align with pre-existing beliefs about inequality in India.
- The need for more critical engagement with the methodology and conclusions of such influential reports is emphasized to ensure sound policy-making based on reliable data.



## Smaller citizens: the gaps in India's education system

April 04, 2024, The Hindu

### Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

B-3 Tribal communities in India

C-1 Visions of Social Change in India

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation



### Context

- The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2023 titled 'Beyond Basics' highlights significant gaps in foundational skills among rural students aged 14 to 18.
- The survey by Pratham assessed over 30,000 students across 28 districts in 26 States.

### Key Findings from ASER 2023

- Over half of the students aged 14-18 struggle with basic mathematics, a skill expected to be mastered by Classes 3 and 4.
- About 25% of students in this age group could not read a Class 2 level text in their vernacular.
- Dropout rates increase with age: 3.9% of 14-year-olds were not in school, rising to 32.6% for 18-year-olds.
- Only 5.6% of students opted for vocational training or related courses.

### Social Group Disparities

- Subsequent surveys, including the India Employment Report 2024 by the Institute for Human Development and the International Labour Organization, indicate improved access to education for all social groups.
- Despite improvements, a persistent hierarchy between social groups remains, with Scheduled Tribes still being the most disadvantaged.

### Observations of Scholars:

**Ramdas Rupavath (Editor of "Politics of Education in India: A Perspective from Below")**

- Educational arrangements in India are imposed and neglect local dialects and traditional knowledge of tribal communities.

**Werner Menski (Foreword of "Politics of Education in India: A Perspective from Below")**

- Tribals remain doubly disadvantaged due to lack of formal education and neglect of traditional knowledge.

**Malli Gandhi (Essay in "Politics of Education in India: A Perspective from Below")**

- High dropout rates and significant gender gaps in Adivasi education need addressing through improvised pedagogy and instruction in the mother tongue.

**Krishna Kumar (Author of "Smaller Citizens: Writings on the Making of Indian Citizens")**

- Persistent inequalities in education are evident in terms of gender, caste, socioeconomic status, and urban-rural divides.

**Apoorvanand and Omita Goyal (Editors of "Education at the Crossroads")**

- Educational institutions are unequal spaces and fail to be engines of social transformation.
- Children from the Scheduled Castes and Tribes still do not feel at home in the schools.
- Stories of villages boycotting schools with a Dalit cook are not exceptions
- Equal and equitable resource distribution is necessary to address societal inequalities and discrimination.

**Akshay Mangla (Author of "Making Bureaucracy Work: Norms, Education and Public Service Delivery in Rural India")**

- Bureaucracy can deliver education effectively in rural India through informal rules that guide interactions with citizens.

**Conclusion**

- Addressing the deep-seated inequalities in India's education system requires a holistic approach that considers the diverse needs and backgrounds of all students.
- Ensuring equal and equitable distribution of educational resources is essential to combat entrenched discrimination and achieve the democratic potential of education.
- This involves not only policy reforms and resource allocation but also a shift in societal attitudes towards inclusivity and equity in education.
- Collaboration among various stakeholders, including government bodies, educational institutions, and civil society, is crucial to implement these changes effectively and create an educational environment that nurtures all students, regardless of their socio-economic status or background.



## How SC verdict on childcare leave opens up possibilities for women

April 26, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

C-1 Visions of Social Change in India

C-3 Industrialization and Urbanisation in India

### Supreme Court Judgment:

- Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud stated that women's participation in the workforce is not just a privilege but a constitutional entitlement protected by Article 15 of the Constitution.
- The state, as an employer, must address the special concerns of women in the workforce.



### Case Background:

- The judgment was in response to a plea by an assistant professor at Government College, Nalagarh, who was denied childcare leave (CCL) to care for her child with a genetic condition.
- Women government employees are eligible for two years of CCL for up to two children until they turn 18.
- The employer argued that adopting the policy was at the state's discretion.
- The judgment emphasized that Article 15 not only restricts gender discrimination but also allows states to make special provisions for women.

*[This highlights the concept of "social rights" (from T.H. Marshall Citizenship Model), where the state has a role in ensuring social justice and equality through special provisions.]*

### Context and Importance:

- Concerns about low female workforce participation have been raised, and there is recognition of the need for childcare services to enhance women's participation in paid work.
- Women in India manage the triple burden of housework, care work, and paid work.
- *[This relates to "double burden" (Arlie Hochschild), which describes the phenomenon where women are expected to perform both paid labor and the majority of unpaid domestic labor.]*
- According to the 2019 Time Use Survey of India, men spend 173 minutes on unpaid domestic and care work compared to 433 minutes by women.
- Marginalized women face greater challenges.
- Working women often encounter "marriage penalties" and "motherhood penalties," leading to temporary workforce withdrawal.
- Female workforce participation in India is approximately 37%.

*[This statistic can be analyzed using "gender stratification theory," which looks at how societal structures and norms create and maintain gender inequalities.]*



## Workforce Participation Statistics:

- PLFS 2022 reports that 60% of women are self-employed, with 53% of these working as unpaid family helpers.
- This situation results from limited opportunities in the labor market and the need for flexible employment near home.

*[This situation can be linked to "informal economy" (Keith Hart), which examines how informal work arrangements often lack the protections and benefits of formal employment, disproportionately affecting women.]*

## Legal Provisions:

- The Constitution allows the state to make special provisions for women and children.
- Recent labor laws mandated childcare services on worksites and paid maternity leaves for certain workers.
- Laws required crèches on worksites with a stipulated number of women, but these were rarely implemented.
- The Labour Code on Social Protection, 2020, made crèches a gender-neutral entitlement, highlighting care as a “parental” responsibility but limited to establishments with 50 or more employees.
- This leaves many women in informal production processes without access to these benefits.
- In a country where care is perceived as the responsibility of women, the verdict makes it clear that the state and the employer have responsibilities to enable women to join and retain their employment.

## Government Intervention:

- Crèches under the National Crèches Scheme were underfunded and limited in number.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development introduced the “Palna Scheme” under Mission Shakti, allowing states to open standalone crèches or convert Anganwadi centers into crèches.
- States like Haryana, Karnataka, Odisha, and Assam have started initiatives, but institutionalizing these efforts with a committed budget is necessary.

## Conclusion:

- Addressing the patriarchal history of childcare requires collective responsibility from the state, employers, and communities.
- Labor markets need to view women as primary earners and facilitate their full employment.
- High female labor force participation is observed in countries where unpaid care work is equally shared.
- Reducing women's unpaid care work by 10 percentage points can increase their labor force participation rate.
- The IMF predicts a potential 27% increase in India's GDP with equal female participation in the labor force.

## India can learn from Japan's 'womenomics' reforms

April 11, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

C-3 Industrialization and Urbanisation in India

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation



### Context:

- Through investments in the care economy, Japan is reaping benefits of bringing more women into the workforce.

### Measures Taken by Japan:

#### Investments in the Care Economy:

- Expansion of daycare capacity from 2.2 million in 2012 to 2.8 million in 2018, reducing daycare waiting lists.
- Announcement of a \$26 billion investment for childcare measures between 2023 and 2026.

#### Parental Leave Policies:

- Year-long partially paid parental leaves, with women receiving 58 weeks and men 52 weeks.
- Introduction of greater flexibility in paternity leave provisions in 2022, including reduced notice periods and allowing men to break up their paternity leave.
- Mandatory disclosures of paternity leave uptake, and encouragement for companies to show that taking paternity leave does not hamper career progression.

*[These policies can be seen as a solution to the problem identified in Arlie Hochschild's "work-family balance theory," which highlights the tension between work and family roles and the emotional labor involved in managing these competing demands.]*

#### Diversity in the Workplace:

- Implementation of the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace in 2016, mandating disclosures of diversity action plans and diversity data.
- Introduction of the "Eruboshi" certification, a five-star system recognizing companies committed to workforce diversity.

*[This can be linked to the concept of "affirmative action," which aims to improve employment and educational opportunities for historically marginalized groups.]*

### Benefits:

#### Increased Women's Labour Force Participation Rate (WLFPR):

- WLFPR in Japan grew from 64.9% in 2013 to 75.2% in 2023, marking the fastest growth in recent decades and the highest amongst G7 countries in the last decade.

- Significant **increase in WLFPR in the 30-34 and 35-39 years age groups, indicating the return of mothers to the workforce.**

### **Economic Impact:**

- Adding roughly three million women to the workforce has **helped bridge labour shortages.**
- Estimates suggest the increase in **WLFPR could have boosted Japan's GDP per capita by 4% to 8%.**

### **Improved Gender Norms and Work Flexibility:**

- **Greater uptake of paternity leave, increasing from 2% in 2012 to 17% in 2023.**
- The "Eruboshi" certification has become aspirational among Japanese firms, with the number of companies receiving the certificate growing from 815 in 2019 to 1905 in 2022.

### **Lessons for India from Japan:**

- Public investments in care infrastructure and services significantly impact WLFPR.
- India needs to focus on similar investments to achieve similar gains.
- Legal entitlements to gender-neutral parental leave are not enough.
- Employer-led approaches are needed to change mindsets and dispel gender stereotypes around care work.
- Invest in a range of care services, including childcare, elder care, domestic work, and long-term care.
- Private sector partnerships can enhance investments in affordable senior living and care services.

### **Conclusion:**

- **India's WLFPR increased from 23% in 2017-18 to 37% in 2022-23.**
- Continued long-term focus on the care economy is necessary to maintain momentum and achieve the goal of a developed India by 2047.

## Age is just a number – a study may help make the argument

April 24, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

C-6 Population Dynamics



### Context:

- Cultural perceptions around age milestones (30, 40, 50) often lead to trite remarks such as “age is just a number” or “you are as old as you feel”.
- These common sayings may hold some truth as the **perception of old age is more flexible than the chronological age marked by a calendar.**

*[This flexibility in perceiving age can be related to the sociological concept of "social constructionism" (Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann), which suggests that our understanding of reality is shaped by social interactions and cultural norms. It suggests that age milestones are socially constructed rather than biologically determined]*

### Study Overview:

- Title: **"Postponing old age: Evidence for historical change toward a later perceived onset of old age"**
- Published in: Psychology and Aging Journal

### Key Findings:

- Over time, the **threshold for being considered "old" has moved forward.**
- [This reflects the idea of "cultural lag" (William Ogburn), where societal norms and perceptions evolve more slowly than technological and medical advancements that extend life expectancy.]*
- As people age, they tend to perceive the onset of old age as being further away.
- This shifting perception aligns with a broader trend of extended adolescence and delayed adulthood.

### Changing Perceptions of Old Age:

- There has been a historical shift towards perceiving old age as starting later.
- Societal changes, including economic conditions and lifestyle shifts, contribute to changing perceptions of old age.**

### Implications for Society:

- Society may need to adjust the definitions of age-related milestones to reflect current trends.
- Policymakers may need to consider these shifting perceptions in areas such as retirement age, social security, and healthcare planning.
- A **more flexible understanding of age could reduce the stigma associated with aging** and promote a more inclusive approach to life stages.
- [This idea aligns with "ageism" (Robert Butler), a term that refers to the discrimination and stereotypes against individuals based on their age, and the importance of combating these biases.]*

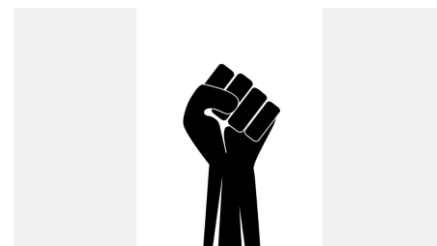
## Reversing the global democratic recession

April 24, 2024, The Hindu

### Chapter:

7 - Politics and Society

C-4 Politics and Society



### Context:

- India is amidst its most significant electoral exercise. Understanding changing perceptions about political ecosystems in India and globally is crucial for future actions.

### Disenchantment from Democracy in the World:

- Pew Research Centre's global survey (February 20 - May 22, 2023) involved 30,861 respondents from 24 countries.
- There is a growing acceptance of alternative governance models.
- Support for representative democracy has declined since 2017, with 70% endorsing direct democracy.
- From 2017 to 2023, there is an increased inclination towards rule by experts (58%) and growing acceptance of authoritarian government models (26%).
- 15% of respondents, particularly in middle-income countries, support military rule.

### The Indian Case:

- In 2017, 44% of Indians favoured representative democracy, which decreased to 36% in 2023.
- Support for a powerful leader with significant authority rose from 55% in 2017 to 67% in 2023.
- Support for rule by experts increased from 65% to 82%.
- 85% of Indians showed a positive response towards military rule or governance by an authoritarian leader.
- Democracy-monitoring organizations describe contemporary India as a "hybrid regime," ranging from "free to partly free," "electoral autocracy," to "flawed democracy."

### Reasons for Disenchantment:

- Perception that democracies lead to delays due to the need for discussions and consensus-building.
- Belief that concentrated power facilitates prompt decision-making and quicker economic development.
- Respondents from countries with lower incomes and less education tend to endorse 'strong' leaders.



## Recent Books/Works that Argue for Democracy:

**"Strengthening Democracy by Design: Challenges and Opportunities" by Nancy L. Thomas and J. Kyle Upchurch (2018):**

- Describes a **robust democracy characterized by four pillars:**
  - **Participatory:** Involving active engagement and participation from all citizens in the democratic process.
  - **Free and Equal:** Ensuring that all individuals have equal rights and opportunities without discrimination.
  - **Educated and Informed:** Highlighting the importance of an informed citizenry that is educated about political processes, governance, and civic responsibilities.
  - **Accountable and Justly Governed:** Emphasizing transparency, accountability, and justice in governance to maintain public trust and legitimacy.
- Incorporating these fundamental attributes into governance is essential for any democracy to function effectively, not merely to be labeled as one.
- Advocates for concerted efforts and well-thought-out measures by all citizens, including those in authority, to embed these pillars in democratic practices.

**"The Civic Bargain – How Democracy Survives" by Brook Manville and Josiah Ober (2023):**

- Democracy entails collective self-governance where citizens assume responsibility for their government, collaborating in a shared endeavor.
- Highlights the significance of common goods and the diversity of interests among citizens.
- Argues that a **robust 'civic bargain system' is crucial for the survival and thriving of democracy.**
- **A civic bargain comprises:**
  - **Norms Facilitating Cooperation:** Establishing norms that encourage cooperation among individuals with differing objectives.
  - **Rules for Decision-Making Procedures:** Setting clear and fair rules for making decisions that impact the community.
  - **Civic Friendship:** Promoting respect and understanding among citizens, treating all participants with dignity within the shared endeavor.
- Emphasizes that democracy embodies a commitment to fellow citizens, entailing responsibility towards each other.
- **Advocates for good citizenship and neighborliness with an open mind.**
- Stresses the importance of transparency and accountability in all actions and decision-making processes.
- **Highlights the centrality of an informed citizenry to the functioning of a healthy democracy.**



## Why the young don't want to have children – and how to fix that

April 3, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

10 - Social Change in Modern Society

C-6 Population Dynamics

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation



### Context

- Previous concerns about a population "time bomb" overwhelming resources have shifted to concerns about declining population.
- The **Lancet report predicts a significant global population decline**, including in India and China, with only sub-Saharan Africa seeing population growth.

*[This shift can be understood through the lens of "demographic transition theory" (Warren Thompson), which posits that societies transition from high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates as they develop economically and socially]*

### Theories on Falling Fertility

- **Education and Empowerment:** Suggests that **women's education and empowerment lead to smaller family sizes** due to greater agency and child survival rates. However, this theory does not fully explain the choice of many to have no children at all.
- **Economic Factors:** Argues that **lack of job security and income support, along with high child-rearing costs, deter people from having children**. However, this fails to account for declining fertility in wealthy countries with supportive parental policies.

### Most Important Reason for Falling Fertility

- **Young people** are intentionally choosing not to have children because they **fear the state of the world their children would inherit**.
- **Climate Crisis:** Young people fear the deteriorating state of the world due to climate change and the lack of adequate global action.

*[Ulrich Beck's "risk society" theory explains how modern societies are increasingly preoccupied with future risks and uncertainties, such as climate change.]*

- **Economic and Social Uncertainty (in India):**
  - The **India Employment Report 2024** highlights that **nearly 90% of young people are informally employed** with no income security and low wages.
  - The **World Inequality Lab reports** that the **richest 1% of Indians hold 40% of the nation's wealth**, fostering social disconnection.
  - India ranks low (126<sup>th</sup> out of 143 countries) on the **World Happiness Report 2024**, with youth being particularly unhappy.
  - India's democracy is rated as "partially free" or "flawed" or as an "electoral autocracy" by many international bodies.

- *[These points can be analyzed using "relative deprivation theory" (Robert K. Merton), which suggests that societal discontent arises from perceived inequalities and unmet expectations.]*

## How to Fix the Problem

- **Promoting Women's Education:** Policies that have reduced fertility can also stabilize it.
- **Restoring Hope for Young People:**
- **Progressive Taxation:** Implement fair tax policies.
- **Labour and Social Security:** Strengthen laws to ensure job security and fair wages.
- **Pension and Benefits:** Improve pension laws, and parental and retirement benefits.
- **Healthcare:** Ensure universal health coverage with high-quality long-term care for chronic conditions.

*[These measures are supported by "welfare state theory" (T.H. Marshall), which emphasizes the role of state policies in ensuring social welfare and reducing inequalities.]*

- **Creating a Hopeful Future:**
- **Equality and Compassion:** Foster a more equal society through progressive policies.
- **Inclusivity and Dignity:** Embrace diversity and support civil dissent, ensuring a respectful and fearless exchange of ideas.
- **Preparing for Aging Population:** Anticipate and plan for the increase in older population numbers.
- *[These principles align with "social justice theory" (John Rawls), which advocates for fairness and equality in social institutions and policies.]*

## Conclusion

- The demographic trends are not irreversible. By implementing policies that restore hope and stability, it is possible to address the declining fertility rates. The future of the nation depends on creating a more equal, compassionate, inclusive, and dignified society for all its citizens.

## Urbanisation, no liberating force for Dalits

April 15, 2024, *The Hindu*



### Chapter:

B-2 Caste System

C-3 Industrialization and Urbanisation in India

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation

### Context

- Indian cities still reflect caste segregation, evident from neighborhood nameplates.
- Ambedkar criticized villages as the operational base of the Hindu social order and opposed recognizing villages as autonomous administrative units in the Constituent Assembly, believing it would be disastrous for untouchables.

### Urbanisation and Ambedkar's Belief

- Ambedkar saw urbanization as a chance for Dalit liberation, as cities could weaken caste oppression seen in villages.
- Urban areas were perceived to offer anonymity and transition from caste-based to class-based societies, focused on resources or capital.
- Despite urban struggles, like renting a house in Baroda, Ambedkar believed in urbanization's liberating potential.

*[This belief aligns with "modernization theory," which posits that urbanization and industrialization can lead to social progress and the breakdown of traditional hierarchies.]*

### Reality of Urbanisation in Present Times

- A century later, caste still dictates spatial arrangements in cities through purity-pollution logic.
- A 2021 consumer survey showed non-vegetarianism as a major barrier to renting housing.
- Regulations like banning meat sales near religious places and municipal bans on street meat sales highlight state-imposed caste biases.

*[These regulations reflect "symbolic violence" (Pierre Bourdieu), where dominant groups impose their cultural norms and values on subordinate groups.]*

- In March 2017, the Uttar Pradesh government banned meat sales near religious places and required meat shops to use black paint or curtains to conceal meat from pedestrians.
- In 2021, several Gujarat municipal corporations banned meat-based street food on main roads, citing "religious sentiments."

*[This highlight "cultural hegemony" (Antonio Gramsci), where the ruling class's worldview becomes the accepted cultural norm, marginalizing other groups.]*

- Studies show Dalit and Muslim ghettos have the worst access to public services and infrastructure.

- Areas with severe pollution, like landfills, are predominantly inhabited by Dalits and Muslims.

*[This situation can be examined through "environmental racism" (Robert Bullard), which looks at how minority communities are disproportionately affected by environmental hazards.]*

- A recent report by the Housing and Land Rights Network on forced evictions in India also shows that Dalits and Muslims are the most impacted by slum demolition drives.
- Dalits and Muslims are most affected by slum demolition drives, revealing systemic discrimination.

### Theoretical View on Segregation

- Gopal Guru explains that ghettos are not just physical spaces but also impact the body and identity of the dwellers.
- The idea of savarna spaces being pure and Dalit spaces being polluted extends to city governance.
- The ghetto dweller is marked by their environment, reinforcing caste-based stereotypes.

*[This aligns with "labeling theory" (Howard Becker), which suggests that individuals become identified with the labels assigned to them by society.]*

- Scholars like Raphael Susewind, Sheba Tejani, and Christophe Jaffrelot highlight severe segregation faced by Muslims and Dalits in cities.

### Conclusion

- While cities might weaken some caste structures, they adapt and persist through new forms sanctioned by language and policy.
- *[This reality underscores "social reproduction theory" (Pierre Bourdieu), which suggests that social structures and inequalities are reproduced across generations.]*
- Indian cities have not realized the potential Ambedkar saw for Dalit liberation; Dalits continue to live in ghettos, reflecting persistent caste segregation.
- Even after a century of urban development, Dalits remain, to use Ambedkar's words, "the children of India's ghettos"

## The limitations of Ambedkarite Dalit politics today

April 18, 2024, The Hindu

### Chapter:

B-2 Caste System

C-4 Politics and Society

C-5 Social Movements in Modern India



### Context

- April celebrations of B.R. Ambedkar's birth anniversary highlight vibrant Dalit presence in public culture.
- However, **Dalit unity in politics is fragmented**, reducing the impact of Ambedkar's political legacy.

*[This situation reflects "charismatic leadership theory" (Max Weber), which emphasizes the role of charismatic and effective leadership in driving social and political movements.]*

### Ambedkar's Vision

- **Ambedkar** envisioned Dalit-Bahujan masses as key claimants of state power.
- His political party, **Republican Party of India (RPI)**, aimed to ally with Adivasis, poor working classes, and landless agrarian laborers to combat feudal and Brahmanical exploitation.

*[This vision aligns with "class consciousness" (Karl Marx), where Ambedkar sought to unite oppressed classes to challenge and transform the existing social order.]*

*[This vision also aligns with "intersectionality", highlighting the need for coalitions among marginalized groups to address overlapping forms of oppression.]*

### Status of his Vision

- **Post-Ambedkar**, Dalit politics aimed to establish Dalit-Bahujan as a transformative force in democratic institutions.
- Contemporary **Dalit politics is fragmented, lacking visionary leadership, a strong social base, and effective political strategies.**

*[This fragmentation can be analyzed using "social movement theory" (Charles Tilly), which examines how movements rise and fall based on their ability to mobilize resources, maintain unity, and sustain collective identity.]*

### Evolution of Dalit Politics

- Post-Independence, agrarian backward castes emerged as new ruling elites in major states.
- In the mid-1990s, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) under Kanshi Ram and Mayawati gained prominence in Uttar Pradesh, advocating for social justice.
- Other Dalit leaders like Prakash Ambedkar and Ramdas Athawale in Maharashtra, Thol. Thirumavalavan in Tamil Nadu, and Ram Vilas Paswan in Bihar also contributed to Dalit political articulation.



- Despite their ideological camaraderie around Ambedkar, these parties occasionally deviated from core principles, such as forming alliances with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).
- The aggressive rise of the BJP under the Hindutva umbrella has not been effectively challenged by Dalit parties.

*[This can be related to "hegemony" (Antonio Gramsci), where dominant groups maintain power not just through coercion but also through cultural and ideological means that marginalize opposition.]*

### Limitations or Shortcomings of Dalit Politics

- Dalit parties lack **strategic interventions**, **innovative slogans**, and **capable leadership** to counter Hindutva's cultural paradigm.

*[This lack of innovation and leadership can be related to "resource mobilization theory" (John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald), which emphasizes the importance of resources, organization, and leadership in social movements.]*

- They are **geographically limited** and **fail to mobilize Dalits** in states with significant Dalit populations, such as Punjab, Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, and Haryana.
- **Adivasis and Muslims** hesitate to support Dalit political outfits due to **doubts about their ideological commitment and electoral viability**.

### 2024 Election:

- Ahead of the 2024 general election, Dalit parties missed the opportunity to present a unified political bloc to influence Dalit-Bahujan voters.
- Refusal to form a unified secular front with mainstream Opposition parties may keep them visible but fails to address the anxieties of the poor Dalit-Bahujan masses under the Hindutva regime.

### Conclusion

- Dalit-Bahujan politics today shows visible deviations from Ambedkar's political legacies.
- The absence of a national political agenda, ideological ruptures, and limitations in challenging right-wing dominance hinder Dalit politics' revival.



## Gone too soon – the subject of youth suicide in India

April 08, 2024, The Hindu

### Chapter:

C-6 Population Dynamics

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation



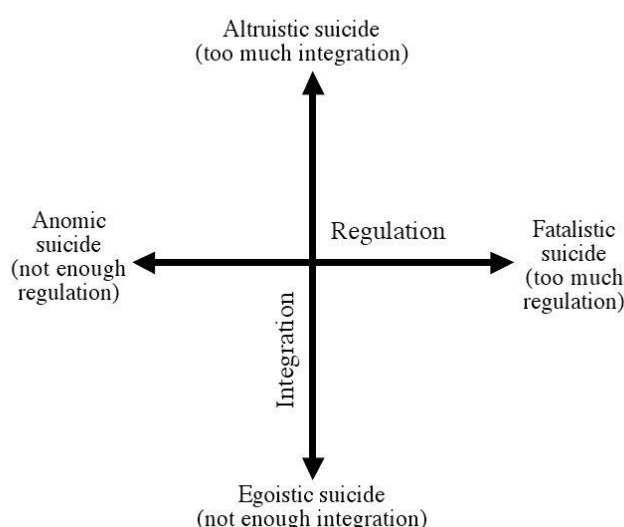
### Context

- India has the highest number of suicides globally, with 1.71 lakh suicides reported in 2022 by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).
- The suicide rate has increased to 12.4 per 100,000, the highest recorded in India.
- 41% of all suicides are by individuals below the age of 30, making it the leading cause of mortality for young women in India.
- A young Indian die by suicide every eight minutes, causing a significant loss to family, society, and the nation.

[This can be linked to "durkheim's theory of suicide" (Émile Durkheim), which categorizes suicide into different types based on the level of social integration and regulation, such as egoistic, altruistic, anomic, and fatalistic suicides.]



Durkheim's four types of suicide (after Pope 1976)



### Risk Factors

- Suicide is a complex behavior influenced by multiple factors including biological, psychological, familial, and sociocultural aspects.
- **Mental Health Problems:** 54% of adolescent suicides are linked to mental health issues.
- **Family Issues:** 36% are related to negative or traumatic family issues.
- **Academic Stress:** 23% are associated with academic stress.
- **Social and Lifestyle Factors:** 20% stem from social and lifestyle issues.
- **Violence:** 22% are related to experiences of violence.

- **Economic Distress:** 9.1% due to economic problems.
- **Relationship Factors:** 9% are connected to relationship issues.
- **Additional Factors:** Physical and sexual abuse, examination failure, intergenerational conflicts, parental pressures, and caste discrimination.
- **Gender-Specific Factors:** For young girls and women, arranged and early marriages, young motherhood, low social status, domestic violence, and economic dependence are significant factors. Rigid gender roles and discrimination also play a role.

*[These gender-specific factors can be connected to "patriarchy" (Sylvia Walby), which examines how systemic inequalities based on gender perpetuate disadvantages for women.]*

- **Academic Pressure:** In 2022, 2,095 people committed suicide due to examination failure. Competitive exams add to this stress.

*[This relates to "meritocracy" (Michael Young), where high expectations and pressure to succeed academically can create significant stress and feelings of failure.]*

- **Substance Use:** Alcohol and substance use are known risk factors.
- **Internet and Social-Media:** Increased Internet use and cyberbullying contribute to suicidal tendencies. **Social media usage of over two hours a day is linked to higher suicide rates among teens.**

*[This can be connected to "social comparison theory" (Leon Festinger), which posits that individuals determine their own social and personal worth based on how they stack up against others, often exacerbated by social media.]*

- **Media Influence:** Sensational reporting of suicides, especially by celebrities, increases suicidal behavior among vulnerable individuals.

*[This aligns with the "Werther effect" (David Phillips), where publicized suicides can lead to imitative behaviors.]*

## Preventive Measures:

- Teaching problem-solving, impulse control, and emotional regulation skills.
- Early identification of mental distress and provision of care in a youth-friendly environment.
- Promoting a healthy lifestyle, including a good diet, regular physical activity, and moderate Internet use.
- **Family and Societal Interventions:**
  - Improving family environments by reducing domestic violence and alcohol consumption.
  - Providing economic assistance to the needy.
  - Implementing educational reforms such as alternative assessment methods.
  - Reducing stigma and discrimination based on caste, religion, and sexuality.
- **Political and Community Efforts:**
  - Political will, intersectoral collaboration, commitment, and community participation are essential.

## Government Initiatives:

- The Ministry of Health's task force developed a **National Suicide Prevention Strategy** launched on November 21, 2022.
- The strategy **aims to reduce suicide rates by 10% by 2030**, focusing on collaboration between various ministries and leveraging educational institutions and youth organizations.

## Conclusion

- The National Suicide Prevention Strategy requires dissemination to all States and stakeholders.
- Budgetary allocations and timely implementation are necessary to address the rising suicide rates effectively.



## For women-led development, invest in the Care Economy

May 8, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

6 - Works and Economic Life

C-3 Industrialization and Urbanisation in India

C-6 Population Dynamics



### Ann Oakley's Perspective on Unpaid Care Work:

- Ann Oakley argues that a **housewife's autonomy is more theoretical than real**.
- The responsibility for housework falls solely on women, and failure to complete it can result in serious consequences, such as the disapproval of husbands and the ill-health of children.

### Care Economy

#### Definition:

- Care Economy is defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as **activities related to the provision of care and support to individuals, households, and communities, including both paid and unpaid work**.
- Encompasses a broad spectrum of labor and resources dedicated to meeting care needs.

#### Gendered Nature of Care Economy:

- **Women disproportionately shoulder the responsibility** for caregiving and domestic tasks.
- Higher contributions of women to unpaid work create barriers to taking up paid employment.
- Care work remains invisible in traditional economic frameworks and national accounting systems in India.

#### Economic Contributions:

- Studies by ILO suggest that **women's unpaid work contributes around \$10 trillion annually to global economic growth, approximately 13% of the world's GDP**.

*[Arlie Hochschild's concept of the "second shift" describes how women often work a full day in paid employment and then come home to a "second shift" of unpaid domestic labor]*

- **ILO Estimates** suggest that **domestic work and unpaid care work in India** constitute about **10-30% of the GDP**.
- The Institutions and Development Database (2014) shows India has the highest female-to-male ratio of time devoted to unpaid care work (9.83), compared to Japan (4.83).
- **Unpaid care work by females contributes 3.1% of GDP, while males contribute 0.4%.**
- **Public investment of 2% of GDP in the care sector** could create around **11 million new jobs in India**.

## Need for Investing in Care Work

### UN Population Fund (2022) Projections:

- Anticipate a significant **increase in the elderly population to 20.8%**.
- **The proportion of children will decrease to 18%**, though their absolute numbers will remain substantial.
- This transition underscores the need to invest in the care services sector to address evolving population needs.

### ILO Projections:

- **Increasing investments in the care services sector could generate 475 million jobs globally by 2030.**

### SDG 5:

- Emphasizes **gender equality** and seeks to recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work.
- Promotes public services, infrastructure, social protection policies, and shared responsibility within households and families.

## Achieving Gender Equality Way Forward:

### ILO's 5Rs Framework

- **Recognition:** Acknowledge the value and importance of care work within society.
- **Reduction:** Reduce the amount of unpaid care to balance caregiving responsibilities with other life aspects.
- **Redistribution:** Redistribute resources and care responsibilities within households and societies.
- **Rewarding:** Ensure all care workers receive fair compensation, including social security benefits, healthcare access, and professional development.
- **Representation:** Empower care workers to participate in decision-making and advocate for their rights and interests.

## Recommendations Under SDG Task Force-6 (Exploring New Pathways to 2030)

### Care as a Core Pillar:

- Identify and prioritize care work as a fundamental component of socio-economic development within G20 countries.
- Recognize the economic and social significance of caregiving, tackle disparities in access and delivery of care services, and incorporate care-related policies into wider economic and social development plans.

### Gender-Inclusive Childcare Policies:

- Create and enforce childcare policies that are inclusive of all genders, enabling both men and women to engage equally in the workforce while fostering gender equality.

### Quality Care Sector in G20 Countries:

- Allocate resources towards enhancing the quality of the care sector, including healthcare, eldercare, childcare, and social services.

### Conclusion

- Strengthening the care economy is essential for achieving women-led development and India's goal of becoming a leading global economy by 2047.
- Prioritize investments from both public and private sectors to strengthen the care economy, including creating new business opportunities within the care sector.
- Fostering women-led development requires addressing the imbalance in unpaid care work, investing in the care sector, and implementing policies that support gender equality and economic growth.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers



## Theory and Praxis of Feminist Internationalist Solidarity

Vol. 59, Issue No. 19, 11 May, 2024, EPW

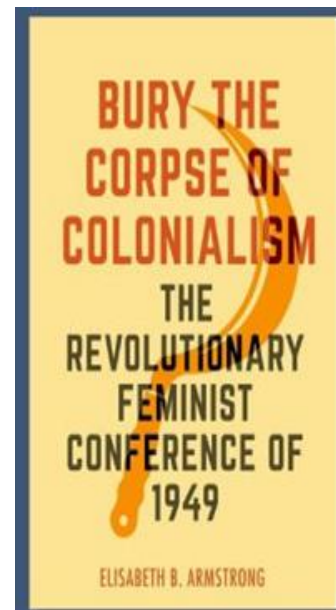
### Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

7 - Politics and Society

### Non-Western Origins of Feminist Internationalism:

- The feminist movement is often perceived as originating in Western capitalist democracies, but Elisabeth Armstrong's book *"Bury The Corpse of Colonialism: The Revolutionary Feminist Conference of 1949"* highlights the significant contributions of socialist women, particularly from Asia, to feminist internationalism.
- The 1949 Asian Women's Conference (AWC) in Beijing is a critical example of this non-Western feminist organizing.



### 1949 Asian Women's Conference (AWC):

- Held in Beijing, the AWC brought together women from various nations to strategize against imperialism and colonialism.
- The conference promoted a radical theory of feminist internationalist solidarity, advocating for women from imperial centers and colonized nations to resist imperialism together.
- The Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) played a key role in organizing the AWC, emphasizing issues like racism and imperialism.

### Concept of Accomplices:

- Armstrong introduces the idea of "accomplices" in feminist activism, distinguishing it from "allies."
- Accomplices actively participate and take risks in the struggle against oppression, as opposed to allies who may offer support without direct involvement.

### Radical Motherhood:

- The conference and subsequent movements promoted the idea of "radical motherhood," where motherhood is politicized to unite women across classes for peace and anti-imperialism.
- This concept helped frame a multi-class international women's movement for peace.

### Intersection with Anti-Colonialism:

- Armstrong's book argues that the struggle for women's rights was deeply intertwined with anti-colonialism.
- The AWC and its participants viewed women's autonomy and anti-colonialism as inseparable, advocating for both simultaneously.

### **Impact on Contemporary Feminism:**

- Although focused on historical events, Armstrong's work suggests that the strategies and solidarities developed during the AWC can inform present-day feminist politics.
- The book calls for a shift from performative allyship to active participation and sacrifice in feminist movements.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

## Bridging the Gender Gap

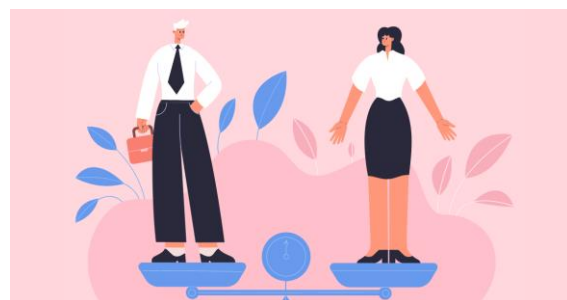
*The Promise and Peril of Using Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to Accelerate Gender Equality*

Vol. 59, Issue No. 18, 04 May, 2024, EPW

### Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

10 - Social Change in Modern Society



### Introduction

- **AI and ML** are revolutionizing economies and politics globally, bringing significant changes across various sectors.
- These technologies **hold potential to advance** Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) like **gender equality**, which has seen slow progress recently (UN 2023).

*[This reflects the idea of "technological determinism" (William Ogburn), suggesting that technology drives social change]*

### Potential of AI

#### Financial Inclusion:

- **AI-based Credit Scoring:** AI uses alternative data sources, like mobile phone usage (spending habits and bill payments), to assess creditworthiness, benefiting women who may lack formal credit histories but have active mobile accounts.

*[Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "social capital" is relevant here, as AI leverages non-traditional data sources to build financial trust and credibility for women.]*

- **Digital Platforms:** Provide greater convenience and privacy for women who might face cultural or social barriers at physical bank branches.
- **Mobile Wallets and SHG Banking:** Enhancing women's economic mobility and building their credit histories through digital transactions and banking sakhis (female friends who help with banking).

*[This aligns with Amartya Sen's "capability approach," emphasizing the enhancement of women's financial capabilities through technology.]*

#### Addressing Gender-Based Violence:

- **ML tools can develop models to predict hotspots and trends of gender-based violence**, allowing proactive measures to prevent such incidents (González-Prieto et al 2023).

#### Evidence Synthesis:

- Generative AI can quickly synthesize specific insights from large volumes of unstructured data (research reports, journal articles), aiding in the **development of evidence-informed social policies** (UNDP 2023).

### Pitfalls of Data Technologies:

- **Algorithmic Bias:** AI algorithms can perpetuate historical gender biases if trained on biased data, leading to unfair outcomes such as women being denied credit despite being as creditworthy as men (Kelly and Mirpourian 2021).
- **Generative AI Hallucinations:** Generative AI can produce false or misleading information, leading to incorrect decisions. For instance, ChatGPT-based tools have been known to fabricate data (Moran 2023).
- *[This can be analyzed through the lens of "information asymmetry" where users might rely on inaccurate AI outputs.]*
- **Poor Data Quality:** Feeding ML algorithms with poor-quality data can worsen existing gender biases and inequality, making it crucial for data and algorithms to be transparent and unbiased.
- **Myopic Point of View:** AI models need to be pre-trained, fine-tuned, and contextualized to capture the complexities of social dynamics accurately.
- **Gender Divide in Technology:** Women are less likely to have access to technology and digital skills, furthering the digital divide and perpetuating gender stereotypes (NS 2019).

### Solutions:

- **Comprehensibility:** Algorithms must be understandable and include robust bias identification and mitigation systems to promote fairness (Cirillo et al 2020).
- **Ethical Data Technologies:** Policymakers, developers, and industry must ensure AI technologies promote the well-being of women and girls, with a focus on ethical development and implementation (UNESCO 2020).
- **AI Role Diversity:** Promoting diversity in AI development teams to prevent gender bias in algorithms and ensure inclusive outcomes.
- **Awareness Programmes:** Integrating AI literacy, ethics, and social sciences into curricula to raise awareness of AI's implications for gender equality.
- **Ensuring AI Fairness:** Avoid using gender as a factor in credit scoring and rely on alternative data sources to ensure fairness. IBM's AI Fairness 360 Toolkit provides techniques to detect and mitigate bias in ML models.
- **Addressing AI Hallucinations:** Using high-quality datasets and adversarial examples to minimize hallucinations and ensure realistic outputs.
- **Policy and Regulation:** Detailed plan for AI advancement and data protection, including frameworks for data privacy and accountability.
- **Understanding Context:** Ensuring diverse and representative data sets to prevent biased outcomes and taking steps to mitigate algorithmic bias (Da Silva nd).

## Shifting Trends in Global Migration

Vol. 59, Issue No. 21, 25 May, 2024, EPW

### Chapter:

10 - Social Change in Modern Society

C-6 Population Dynamics



### Overview of Global Migration Trends

- **Global migrant population** has **increased** significantly from 84 million in 1970 to 161 million in 1995, and **281 million in 2020** (World Migration Report 2024).
- **Share of migrants in the global population increased** from 2.3% to 2.8% **to 3.6% over these years.**

### Regional Distribution of Migrants

- **Most migrants moved to developed regions:** Europe, North America, and Oceania  
*[Immanuel Wallerstein's World-Systems Theory can explain this trend, as core countries (developed regions) attract migrants from peripheral and semi-peripheral regions due to better economic opportunities and living conditions.]*
- Oceania has the highest share of migrants, with the UAE leading among nations.

### Gender and Age Composition

- **Slight increase in the share of male migrants** from 50.6% in 2000 to 51.9% in 2020.  
*[Ravenstein's Laws of Migration suggest that males are more likely to migrate internationally, often due to economic reasons and traditional gender roles.]*
- Countries like the US, Canada, France, Spain, Italy, and India have more female than male immigrants.
- **Share of migrant children fell sharply** from 16% to 10.1% over the last 25 years, **indicating restricted avenues for legal emigration of entire families.**

### Economic Aspects of Migration

- **Migrant workers dominate international migration flows**, estimated at 169 million.
- **Arab states are a major destination**, with migrant workers comprising 41.45% of their working population.
- **Global remittances increased** from \$128 billion in 1995 to \$831 billion in 2020, surpassing global foreign direct investments.

### Shifts in Migration Patterns

- **Increasingly, migration flows occur between affluent countries rather than just from poor to rich nations.**
- Significant changes in the top 20 origin and destination countries over the last 25 years.

## Top Origin and Destination Countries

- India's emigrants more than doubled to 17.8 million, making it the largest originating nation.
- Mexico (11.1 million), Russian Federation (10.7 million), and China (9.8 million) are other significant origins.
- Drop in low and medium HDI countries in the top 20 origin countries from 13 to 4.
- 57% of emigrants are now from medium and high HDI countries, indicating a preference for skilled migrants.
- Similar drop in low and medium HDI countries in the top 20 destination countries, except India.

*[This trend can be analyzed using the concept of "brain drain" (Albert Hirschman), where highly skilled individuals migrate from developing countries to developed countries in search of better opportunities.]*

## Top Destination Countries:

- Notable increases in migrant shares in UAE, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, and the UK.
- High immigrant population shares in Canada (20.7%), Jordan (26.4%), Australia (29.1%), Saudi Arabia (37.3%), Hong Kong (38.1%), Kuwait (69.8%), and UAE (85.3%).

## Conclusion

- The global migration landscape has evolved significantly over the past 25 years, with notable increases in migrant populations and shifts in migration patterns towards more affluent countries.
- Understanding these trends is crucial for comprehending the socio-economic impacts on both origin and destination countries, and the role of migration in global economic development.



## Should reservation in jobs only be in proportion to the population?

May 17, 2024, The Hindu



### Chapter:

B-2 Caste System

C-1 Visions of Social Change in India

C-6 Population Dynamics

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation

### Context:

- In the recent election campaign, two significant ideas—caste census and proportional representation—have been at the forefront of political debate.
- The Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has popularized the slogan "Jitni abadi, utna haq" (the rights of a group are proportionate to the group's share in the total population).
- This slogan, advocating for proportional representation based on population, has sparked a discussion on its potential efficacy and implications for social justice in India.
- To understand the impact of combining these two ideas, it is essential to evaluate the pros and cons of such an approach and consider Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's nuanced views on proportional representation.

### Pros and Cons of Proportional Representation in Social Justice

#### Pros:

##### Enhanced Representation:

- Proportional representation ensures that marginalized and minority groups receive a fair share of opportunities and resources, reflecting their demographic weight. This can lead to greater inclusion and empowerment of these groups.

*[Robert Dahl's theory of pluralism supports the idea that diverse representation in decision-making bodies enhances democracy and ensures that minority interests are considered.]*

*[Rudolph's have said that caste has helped to make success of representative democracy]*

##### Addressing Historical Injustices:

- It acts as a corrective measure for historical discrimination and exclusion, helping to level the playing field for communities that have been systematically disadvantaged.

##### Informed Policymaking:

- Conducting a caste census and using population data can lead to more precise and effective policies, addressing the specific needs of different sub-castes and social groups.

##### Increased Accountability:

- Policies based on accurate demographic and socioeconomic data can enhance transparency and accountability, ensuring that affirmative action benefits the intended groups.

### Economic Empowerment:

- Fair representation in jobs and education can economically uplift marginalized groups, **contributing to overall societal development and reducing poverty.**

### Cons:

#### Implementation Challenges:

- The logistics of implementing proportional representation are complex, particularly in India's diverse and stratified society. **Collecting accurate data and ensuring fair distribution can be contentious and difficult.**

*[For example, Castes within Vokkalinga community belong to both forward and backward castes]*

#### Potential for Social Division:

- Emphasizing group-based representation might **deepen social divisions** and lead to **demands for further sub-categorization** within marginalized groups, fostering internal conflicts.

#### Constitutional Concerns:

- Critics argue that proportional representation based on population is against the **spirit of the Constitution, which emphasizes individual equality rather than group-based rights.**
- It might undermine the principle of equal opportunity.

#### Reinforcement of Caste Identities:

- Focusing on caste-based representation could **perpetuate caste identities and the caste system**, contrary to the goal of moving towards a more caste-neutral society.
- [Which may lead 'Substantialisation of Caste' (Louis Dumont)]*

#### Economic Disparities Within Castes:

- Using population as the sole basis for representation might overlook economic disparities within castes. Some sub-groups within a caste might be economically well-off, while others remain disadvantaged, leading to inequitable distribution of benefits.
- [Justice G. Rohini Commission Report - As many as 983 OBC communities, 37% of the total have zero representation in both central government jobs and admissions to central universities.]*

#### Political Manipulation Risks:

- There is a risk that political pressures could influence the implementation of proportional representation, leading to favoritism and biased distribution of resources.
- [Robert Michels' "iron law of oligarchy" suggests that political systems are prone to becoming dominated by a few, leading to potential manipulation and inequities.]*

### Ambedkar's View on Proportional Representation According to Sukhdeo Thorat

#### Socioeconomic and Educational Standing:

- Ambedkar **advocated for representation based on the socioeconomic and educational standing of a group, rather than solely on population numbers.**

- He believed that fair representation should consider the economic, social, and educational status of different groups.

### Proportional Redistribution:

- He supported the idea that the majority of seats in legislatures and other representative bodies should be redistributed to ensure fair representation of social and religious minorities.
- This redistribution should reflect the socioeconomic standing of these groups.

### Supplementary Use of Population Data:

- While Ambedkar acknowledged the role of population data as an indicator, he did not view it as the ultimate measure for representation.
- In the absence of comprehensive socioeconomic indicators at the time, population data served as a tentative measure to gauge fair representation.

### Distinction in Policies:

- Ambedkar made a clear distinction between policies aimed at economic and educational empowerment for all, regardless of caste or religion, and affirmative action policies specifically for groups facing discrimination.
- He emphasized the need for additional policies to address the historical and systemic discrimination faced by certain groups.

### Affirmative Action Beyond Public Sector:

- He argued that affirmative action should not be limited to the public sector but should also extend to the private sector, where discrimination was more rampant.
- This broader scope was crucial for ensuring comprehensive social justice.

### Conclusion

- The slogan "Jitni abadi, utna haq" seeks to ensure fair representation and address historical injustices. However, it also presents significant challenges, including implementation complexities, potential for social division, constitutional concerns, and the risk of reinforcing caste identities.
- A balanced approach is needed, one that uses accurate data to inform policies while promoting overall social cohesion and equality. The ultimate goal should be a just and equitable society where all individuals, regardless of their group identity, have equal access to opportunities and resources.

# Recognising Cohabitation Relationships

## The Need for Legislative Framework

Vol. 59, Issue No. 19, 11 May, 2024, EPW

### Chapter:

B-5 Systems of Kinship in India

C-1 Visions of Social Change in India



### Introduction

- Traditional Indian family structures are evolving due to urbanization, increased financial independence, and shifting societal values.
- *[This change can be understood through Anthony Giddens' concept of "detraditionalization," which describes the declining influence of traditional norms and values in modern society.]*

### Joint Families

- Joint families are a key feature of Indian society, typically patriarchal, with men as breadwinners and women in inferior roles despite legal inheritance rights.
- Joint families involve living under one roof, sharing resources, and participating in common worship. They consist of a couple, their married sons with families, and unmarried children.
- *Fraternity bonds and community values often overshadow individual rights, leading to challenges in conjugal and equal relationships.*

### Alternative Family Forms

- **Nuclear Families:** Research highlights the cultural patterns that prioritize community culture within joint families, impacting nuclear family dynamics (Munda and Soreng 2019).
- **Dual-Earner Families:** Both spouses earn, but traditional gender roles persist, with husbands exerting control over wives' professional and personal lives.
- *Urbanization and financial independence have led young couples to adopt live-in relationships despite traditional stigmas (Narayan et al 2021).*
- *[This shift reflects idea of "individualization," where people increasingly make personal choices over traditional expectations.]*

### Live-in Relationships: An Emerging Trend

- **Definition:** Long-term cohabitation without legal marriage, providing flexibility and ease of separation (Sushma 2021).
- **Advantages:** Allows couples to test compatibility and avoid lengthy judicial proceedings in case of separation (Abhang 2014).
- *[Zygmunt Bauman's concept of "liquid love" highlights the fluidity and transient nature of modern relationships.]*

- *[Anthony Giddens' theory of "plastic sexuality" describes how intimate relationships have become more flexible and negotiated in modern societies.]*

## Challenges

- **No legal protections** for live-in partners in property or maintenance disputes.
- Conservative opposition, especially against women in live-in relationships (Agrawal 2012).

## Key Judicial Decisions

- **1978:** Recognized live-in relationships as "in the nature of marriage" after a significant period (**Badri Prasad v Board of Consolidators**).
- **2001:** Validated live-in relationships as an exercise of individual freedom and choice.
- **2018:** Affirmed live-in relationships as part of the fundamental right to life and liberty, emphasizing constitutional morality over social morality (**Navtej Singh Johar and Ors v Union of India**).
- **Judicial Criteria:** Partners must be of marriageable age, legally able to wed, cohabit for an extended period, and be socially recognized as similar to married persons.

## Current Legal Ambiguity

- **Fragmented Guidance:** Judicial pronouncements provide **partial protection** but lack comprehensive legislation.
- **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005:** Covers "relationships in the nature of marriage" but leaves determination to judiciary.
- **Legitimacy of Children:** Recent judgments grant legitimacy to children from long-term live-in relationships, based on the presumption in favor of marriage (Krishnan and Another v Kattukandi Edathil Valsan and Others, 2022).

## Rationale for Comprehensive Legislation

- **Changing Perceptions:** Live-in relationships are increasingly seen as rational choices for assessing compatibility.
- **Social Acceptance:** Growing acceptance necessitates clear legal protections.
- **Preventing Conflicts:** Legislation can prevent conflicting judgments and ensure consistent protection of individual rights.

## Recommendations

- **Need for Inclusive Legislation:** Laws should protect all individuals in live-in relationships, including those in same-sex relationships, which were decriminalized in India.
- **Comprehensive Protections:** Legislation should address property rights, maintenance, and protection against domestic violence for all partners.

## Conclusion

- The legislative narrative in India must adapt to these changes to protect individuals in live-in relationships and promote societal harmony.



# Behind Supreme Court's remarks on sanctity of marriage, a growing social anxiety

May 16, 2024, Indian Express

## Chapter:

*B-5 Systems of Kinship in India*

*C-1 Visions of Social Change in India*



## Case Overview

### Nature of the Case:

- Matrimonial dispute involving allegations of cruelty and dowry demands.
- **Supreme Court ruling on April 19 declared the marriage null and void due to non-fulfillment of Section 7 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (HMA).**
- **The couple had registered their marriage under HMA without a ceremonial wedding, lacking the essential saptapadi** (seven steps taken by the bride and groom before the sacred fire).

## Court Observations

### 1. Sanctity of Marriage:

- The court emphasized the sacred nature of marriage in Indian society.
- **Urged young people to consider deeply before entering into marriage.**
- Highlighted marriage as essential to the social fabric.

### 2. Ceremonial Requirements:

- The court noted that the genesis of a sacred process cannot be a trivial affair.
- Emphasized that the ceremonial aspects of HMA, such as saptapadi, are crucial.
- **Marriage under Hindu law is considered a sacrament (samskara) and an event conferring salvation.**

### 3. Social Commentary:

- The court made significant social commentary, urging young men and women to think about the significance and centrality of marriage in India.
- **Clearly stated what a marriage is not: it is not a commercial transaction, not an event for "song and dance," "wining and dining," or an occasion for dowry exchange under undue pressure.**
- **Critiqued the booming wedding planning and auxiliary businesses that commercialize marriage.**

### 4. Definition of Marriage:

- Defined marriage as a solemn foundational event conferring husband and wife status.
- **Stated that a Hindu marriage facilitates procreation, consolidates family units, and solidifies the spirit of fraternity within communities.**



## Critical View of the Court's Observations

### Marriage as a Means of Gatekeeping:

- Marriage **grants legitimacy to family building and procreation.**
- Alternatives like adoption and assisted reproductive technologies exist but are legally gatekept by marriage.
- Feminist scholarship highlights the fragility of the institution of marriage, revealing its gatekeeping role.

### Caste Endogamy:

- **Claimed harmony between communities is contradicted by the practice of caste endogamy among Hindus.**
- Defiance of caste endogamy often leads to violent disruptions of social harmony.
- *[According to the Studies conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research in 2016, about 5% of the marriages in India are inter-caste marriages]*

### Patriarchal Idea of Marriage

- **Marriage is seen as an aspirational ideal-type but often reproduces gendered roles and domestic violence.**
- Traditional gender roles persist despite economic and social changes.
- **Patrilocality and marital kinship roles add to the complexities young couples face.**

### Youth's Critical Engagement:

- Young people critically and strategically reconsider marriage.
- Considerations include financial security, legal benefits, and avoidance of societal moral policing.
- Greater access to civic-political and economic-social-cultural rights deepens anxieties around the institution of marriage.

### Conclusion

- The court's remarks reflect broader social anxieties and the evolving nature of marriage in contemporary India.
- The interplay of traditional values, legal frameworks, and modern aspirations shapes the ongoing discourse on the sanctity and role of marriage in Indian society.

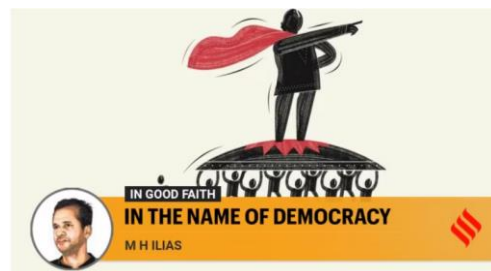
## In India, the idea of democracy differs from its practice

*May 10, 2024, Indian Express*

### Chapter:

*C-4 Politics and Society*

### Giorgio Agamben's Perspective: Democracy as Constitutive and Governance Technique:



- Italian political philosopher Giorgio Agamben describes democracy as both a means of constituting the body politic (the collective of citizens as a political entity) and a technique of governing.
- As a governance technique, democracy has served as a source of legitimacy for governments to exercise power and control over the “population” since the French Revolution.

### Democracy in Principle vs. Practice

- Democracy in its ideal form promotes freedom to dissent, demand justice, recognize differences, and respect the rights of others.
- **The concept of “majoritarian consensus” often determines the character and content of democracy**, implying that majority opinion shapes democratic governance.
- In practice, the ideal principles of democracy often take a backseat to administrative practices and political realities.

*[Max Weber's notion of "formal rationality" versus "substantive rationality" can be used to understand how bureaucratic and administrative practices often overshadow the substantive democratic values of justice and equality.]*

- There is a lack of deep, ongoing examination of the values that should underpin democracy in a diverse and pluralistic society like India.

### Historical Context of Democracy in India

#### National Movement:

- **The idea of democracy was introduced and cultivated during India's national movement for independence.**
- Although **initially influenced by upper-caste and middle-class interests, democratic values and principles gradually became embedded in the political landscape and public imagination.**
- Key leaders like Gandhi, Ambedkar, and various socialists, despite their ideological differences, converged on the importance of tolerance and dissent as foundational democratic values.

#### B R Ambedkar's View:

- Dr. B R Ambedkar **viewed democracy as a value that needed constitutional protection and guarantee**, especially **in light of India's structural social inequalities.**
- Ambedkar believed that without such protection, democracy would not adequately serve the marginalized and oppressed sections of society.

## Gandhi's View:

- Mahatma Gandhi **opposed the formal constitutionalization of democracy**, arguing that it should be preserved as an essential societal value rather than merely a legal framework.
- He believed **democracy should not be privileged or legalized over traditional social morality and saw it as an externally imposed concept rather than a natural sentiment within Indian society.**
- Gandhi emphasized **the "real" democratic tradition in India, which he believed flourished through religious coexistence and communal harmony.**

## Post-Independence Democracy in India

### Early Years After Independence:

- In the initial years post-Independence, the Indian state demonstrated some commitment to justice and fundamental rights.
- However, the **tolerance of dissent remained an incomplete project**, with various incidents reflecting the state's struggle to fully embrace democratic principles.

### Emergency Period (1975):

- The proclamation of Emergency by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975 marked a significant period where the state acted as a "guardian of democracy," albeit through authoritarian means.
- During the Emergency, Sanjay Gandhi's influence over the government became a notable example of undemocratic practices within a democratic framework.

### Current Regime and Popular Organizations:

- Unlike the Emergency period, the current regime has normalized and legitimized the influence of certain organizations, such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), through popular means.
- This shift indicates a change in how democratic values and principles are perceived and practiced, with potential alterations in the foundational tenets of democracy.
- *[Pierre Bourdieu's theory of "symbolic power" explains how the current regime uses cultural symbols and popular support to legitimize its influence and reshape democratic values]*

### Shift in Political Values:

- Indian politics increasingly appears detached from certain human values that are often considered essential for a functioning democracy.
- This detachment raises concerns about the future trajectory of democratic practices and principles in the country.

# Cost of inequality: What India's 129 rank in Global Gender Gap Index means

June 20, 2024, Indian Express

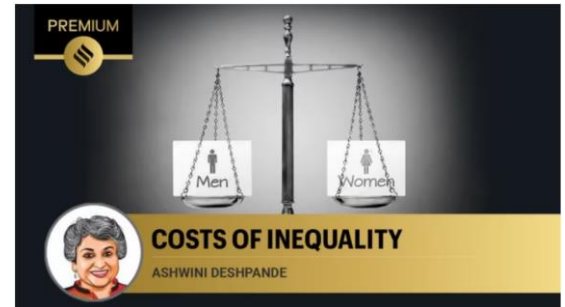
## Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation

## Context

The **2024 Global Gender Gap Index** ranks **India at 129 out of 146** countries, placing it 18th from the bottom. This ranking is consistent with previous years, where India has remained in the bottom 20.



## Global Gender Gap Index

- Introduced in 2006, the Global Gender Gap Index measures gender disparities across four sub-indices: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.
- The index ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating complete parity.
- It focuses on gender gaps, tracking changes over time and across countries.

## Health

- India's **Health and Survival Score is 0.951**, indicating that 95.1% of the male-female gap has been closed.
- Despite this progress, India ranks **142nd out of 146 countries** in health, as other countries have performed better.
- *[This reflects idea of "capability deprivation," where inequalities in health hinder individuals' ability to function fully in society.]*

## Education

- In educational attainment, 96.4% of the gender gap has been closed.
- India ranks **112th out of 146 countries**, as other nations have made more substantial progress.
- *[Reflects Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital," emphasizing the role of education in social inequality]*

## Economic Participation

- India's **Economic Participation score is 39.8%**, placing it **142nd out of 146 countries**.
- Although this is an improvement from 32.6% in 2021, it is still low and less than the 2012 score of 46%.
- India is among the countries with the lowest levels of economic parity, similar to Bangladesh, Sudan, Iran, Pakistan, and Morocco, with less than 30% gender parity in estimated earned income and less than 50% in labour force participation.

- *[This can be linked to the "feminization of poverty" (Diana Pearce), where women disproportionately experience poverty and economic disadvantages]*

## Political Participation

- India has **closed 25.1% of the gender gap in political participation**, ranking **65th globally**.
- India's position has worsened from 51 in 2021, reflecting a decline in this area over the past two years.
- In 2014, India's score was 43.3%, indicating a significant regression over the last decade.

## Comparison to Other Countries and Regions

- South Asia ranks 7th out of eight regions globally, above only the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).
- Within South Asia, India ranks fifth out of seven countries, with Bangladesh leading at the 99th position globally.
- This highlights India's poor performance in gender parity compared to several of its immediate neighbours.

## Implications

### Persistent Gender Gaps:

- Despite improvements in some areas, significant gender gaps remain.
- Economic costs of sidelining women are well-documented, with an **OECD estimate** indicating that **gender-based discrimination could cost the global economy up to \$12 trillion**.
- **Reducing gender discrimination can boost GDP growth rates.**
- *[Reflects "human capital theory" (Gary Becker), emphasizing the economic benefits of investing in human potential.]*

### Need for Mainstreaming Gender Equality:

- Gender equality should be a central concern in economic policymaking, not an afterthought.
- Achieving **economic equality requires societal change** to view women as independent, capable adults who can make their own choices and participate equally in decision-making processes.
- *[Aligned with "gender role theory", which explores how societal expectations shape gendered behaviors and opportunities.]*

## Conclusion

India's low ranking in the Global Gender Gap Index underscores the need for concerted efforts to address gender inequality. The persistence of gender gaps in health, education, economic participation, and political empowerment indicates that much work remains to be done. Integrating gender equality into all levels of policy and societal norms is essential for progress.



## Why caste should inform debates on inequality in the country

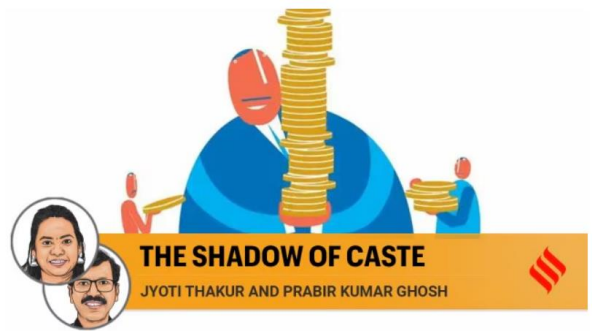
June 18, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

B-2 Caste System

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation



### Context

A recent **working paper from the World Inequality Lab** has sparked discussions on the **growing gap between the rich and poor in India**. However, inequality in India is not just about economic disparity but also deeply intertwined with caste-based inequalities. Metrics like the **Gini coefficient and percentile ratio** are crucial for **assessing economic inequality**. By examining these metrics for the periods of 2017-18 and 2022-23, the study explores changes in consumption inequality both overall and within social groups such as the Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and the General category using the Periodic Labour Force data.

### Gini Coefficient

**Overall Decrease:** The overall Gini coefficient **decreased from 0.359 in 2017-18 to 0.309 in 2022-23**, indicating a **reduction in overall income inequality by 0.050 points**.

### By Social Group:

- **Scheduled Tribes (ST):** Decreased from 0.322 to 0.268, a 0.054 point drop, signaling an **improvement in equitable consumption distribution**.
- **Scheduled Castes (SC):** Decreased from 0.312 to 0.273, showing a **reduction in inequality**.
- **Other Backward Classes (OBC):** Decreased from 0.336 to 0.288, a 0.048 point **decrease**.
- **General Category:** Decreased from 0.379 to 0.306, **the most substantial reduction of 0.073 points**, indicating significant socioeconomic changes, including **social mobility and effective policy interventions**.

### Consumption Share

- **Scheduled Tribes (ST):** Accounted for 9% of the population in 2022-23 but only had a **7% share in consumption**.
- **Scheduled Castes (SC):** Constituted 20% of the population with a **16% consumption share**.
- **Other Backward Classes (OBC):** Made up 43% of the population and had a **41% consumption share**, indicating a more conservative consumption pattern.
- **General Category:** Despite being 28% of the population, this category commanded a **36% consumption share**, highlighting significant disparities.



These figures underline **persistent disparities in consumption distribution** across social groups, with SCs and STs consistently lagging behind the General and OBC categories.

## Consumption Share within Groups

### Lower Deciles:

- For ST, SC, and OBC groups, there was a **marginal decrease in consumption** levels for the bottom 20% decile from 2017-18 to 2022-23.
- For the General category, this decrease was more pronounced, indicating a relative decline in consumption among the poorest segment.

### Upper Deciles:

- **Consumption slightly increased for all social groups** in the top 20% decile.
- The **General category experienced a significant 10 percentage points surge in consumption** between the two periods, pointing to a potential concentration of wealth among high-caste elites.

## Implications

### Economic Realities:

- Disparities in consumption patterns among different socioeconomic groups indicate disparities in income, access to resources, or purchasing power.
- *[Connected to "poverty cycle" (Oscar Lewis), where disadvantaged groups experience ongoing economic hardship.]*

### Concentration of Wealth:

- The significant rise in consumption among the wealthiest segment of the General category suggests a **concentration of wealth among high-caste elites**.
- *[Linked to "elite theory" (Vilfredo Pareto), which suggests that a small group holds significant wealth and power.]*
- The **disparity between the General category and other social groups remains substantial**, reflecting persistent consumption pattern discrepancies.
- *[Reflects "cumulative disadvantage", where initial disadvantages lead to further negative outcomes.]*

### Persistent Inequalities:

- Despite India's strides in reducing multidimensional poverty and constitutional abolition of caste discrimination, inequality among caste groups persists.
- Affirmative action programmes have had limited success in bridging these gaps.

## Conclusion

The study highlights that caste continues to play a significant role in shaping economic inequalities in India. Addressing these disparities requires policies that not only focus on economic inequality but also take into account the entrenched caste-based disparities that influence access to resources and opportunities.

# Addressing Workplace Inequality: The Challenges Facing Married, Working Women in India

June 29, 2024, Indian Express

## Chapter:

5 - Stratification and Mobility

6 - Works and Economic Life

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation



## Context

A **Reuters investigation** has revealed discriminatory hiring practices at **Foxconn's** assembly headquarters in Sriperumbudur, **Tamil Nadu**. **Married women** are reportedly rejected due to family commitments, pregnancy, higher absenteeism, and cultural issues like wearing jewelry that interferes with production. This investigation has highlighted broader issues of gender discrimination in the workplace.

*[Reflects "institutionalized discrimination," where organizational practices systematically disadvantage certain groups.]*

## Government Response

- **Immediate Action:** The Centre has sought a report from the Tamil Nadu government citing Section 5 of the Equal Remuneration Act 1976, which forbids gender-based discrimination in hiring.
- **Labour Ministry:** The Ministry of Labour and Employment has demanded a report from the Tamil Nadu labour department. Foxconn responded with a statement affirming its commitment to workplace equality.
- **Judicial Precedent:** The **Supreme Court** of India, in the **Union of India and Others vs Ex. Lt. Selina John case**, ruled that **terminating employment due to marriage is unconstitutional** and a clear **case of gender discrimination**.

## Current Status of Women's Labour Force Participation

- **Statistics:** **Women's labour force participation was 32.7% in 2023**, significantly lower than men's 76.8%.
- **Global Perspective:** The **UN Women and UNDESA report, "Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023,"** warns that **without intervention, an entire generation of women will continue to spend a disproportionate amount of time on housework due to prejudicial norms**.
- *[Reflects "gender stratification," where societal structures create unequal opportunities for different genders.]*

## Reasons for the Current Scenario

- **Lack of Institutional Support:** Many workplaces lack essential support systems such as creches, flexible working hours, and maternity benefits, which disproportionately affect women.
- **Cultural Norms and Gender Roles:** Deep-rooted cultural beliefs about gender roles often dictate that women should prioritize family and domestic responsibilities over professional aspirations.
- *[Reflects "patriarchy" (Sylvia Walby), a system where men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, and control of property.]*
- **Discrimination in Hiring Practices:** Women, especially those of childbearing age or those who are married, face discrimination in hiring due to assumptions about their commitment and reliability.
- **Inadequate Legal Protections:** Existing laws meant to protect women in the workplace are often poorly implemented and lack enforcement mechanisms, leading to continued discrimination and harassment.
- **Economic Pressures:** Companies may perceive hiring women as more costly due to potential maternity leave and other associated benefits, leading to a preference for male employees.
- *[Reflects "neoliberalism", where market logic prioritizes cost-efficiency over equity.]*
- **Educational Gaps:** In many regions, women have less access to higher education and professional training, limiting their employment opportunities and career advancement.
- **Underrepresentation in Leadership:** Women are underrepresented in leadership roles, which perpetuates a lack of policies and workplace cultures supportive of gender equality.
- *[Reflects "glass ceiling", an invisible barrier preventing women from reaching top positions.]*

## Way Forward

### Policy and Legal Reforms

- **Strengthen Legal Frameworks:** Ensure gender equality laws are robust and enforced. Introduce new laws for gaps like mandatory paternity leave and protections against marital status discrimination.
- **Gender Audits:** Regularly conduct audits to identify and address workplace disparities in hiring, pay, promotions, and conditions.

### Workplace Practices

- **Flexible Work Options:** Encourage flexible hours, remote work, and part-time opportunities to support family responsibilities.
- **Support Facilities:** Mandate facilities like creches and nursing rooms for working mothers.
- **Equal Pay and Opportunities:** Enforce policies ensuring equal pay and career advancement opportunities.

## Cultural and Social Changes

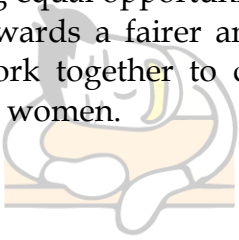
- **Shared Responsibilities:** Promote campaigns encouraging men to share household chores and childcare.
- **Gender Equality Education:** Integrate gender equality into school curriculums to challenge traditional gender roles from an early age.
- *[Connected to "gender role socialization", where societal norms dictate appropriate behaviors for different genders.]*

## Economic Support

- **Incentivize Equality:** Provide tax breaks or incentives for companies demonstrating gender equality in hiring, pay, and promotion.
- **Support Female Entrepreneurs:** Offer grants, loans, and mentorship for female entrepreneurs and women-led businesses.
- *[Reflects "social entrepreneurship" (Muhammad Yunus), where business solutions address social issues.]*

## Conclusion

Addressing gender discrimination in the workplace requires systemic changes and cultural shifts. Ensuring equal opportunities and creating supportive work environments for women are essential steps towards a fairer and more inclusive society. The government, organizations, and society must work together to dismantle patriarchal norms and create a truly supportive system for working women.



Awakening Toppers

## Does inequality lead to growth? | Explained

June 03, 2024, The Hindu



### Chapter:

#### 5 - Stratification and Mobility

#### C-3 Industrialization and Urbanisation in India

#### C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation

### Context

- Paris School of Economics shows that inequality in modern India is greater than during colonial times.
- Some argue inequality harms democratic processes, while others see it as an incentive for entrepreneurship.

### Monopoly Power and Consumption

- Concentration of monopoly power among capital (e.g., billionaires) relative to labor **can negatively affect consumption, welfare, and growth.**
- Billionaires set prices due to their market dominance, leading to **higher mark-ups above production costs.**
- *[Related to "economic exploitation" (Karl Marx), where the bourgeoisie exploit workers by controlling market prices.]*
- In economies with strong monopolies, real wages are lower for the same level of money wages, **reducing purchasing power.**
- Current high inflation rates in developed economies are partly due to **"greedflation"** (companies raising prices to increase profit margins post-pandemic).
- **Monopoly results in less output** compared to competitive economies, leading to welfare loss, lower real wages, and reduced levels of output and investment.

### Inequality and Growth

- Setting up new factories creates a multiplier effect, where wages spent by workers increase overall income more than the initial investment.
- **Monopolies reduce the multiplier effect by lowering real wages and consumption,** weakening overall economic growth.
- The rich consume more in absolute terms but a smaller portion of their income. **In unequal economies, less income goes to those who are likely to spend it, leading to weaker economic growth.**
- *[Related to "marginal propensity to consume" (J.M. Keynes), where lower-income individuals spend a higher proportion of their income.]*

## Redistribution and Growth

- Some argue redistribution harms job creation by reducing entrepreneurial incentives in a high-tax regime.
- Investment is driven by future profit expectations, not accumulated wealth.
- Taxing wealth does not affect investment as it leaves future profit expectations unchanged.
- *[Polish economist Michal Kalecki's argues that taxes on wealth do not affect investment if profit expectations remain high]*
- Redistribution can strengthen the multiplier process by increasing income and purchasing power, encouraging investment.
- Thomas Piketty's proposal of taxing billionaire wealth to provide basic income can create a new class of entrepreneurs, despite some billionaires potentially pulling back on investment.

## Conclusion

- Redistribution alone is not a complete solution; excessively high taxation can be detrimental. Combined with other policy measures, reducing inequality can lead to a healthier economy.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers



## Passion in the Modern Workplace

### Navigating Affective Landscapes

Vol. 59, Issue No. 24, 15 Jun, 2024, EPW

#### Chapter:

6 - Works and Economic Life

C-3 Industrialization and Urbanisation in India



#### Context

- The **COVID-19 pandemic led to the Great Resignation** in 2021, where many people left their jobs due to uncertainties in the job market.
- As the pandemic's impact lessens, **employers are trying to bring employees back (Great Return) by emphasizing "passion"** to keep them engaged and motivated.
- Passion is an intense and enduring emotional state that motivates individuals to pursue activities with enthusiasm, creativity, and dedication
- In India, a billionaire tech founder suggested that young people should **work 70 hours a week out of nationalistic passion**.
- The book *"Passionate Work: Endurance after the Good Life"* by **Renyi Hong** explores the **connection between passion and work, focusing on management ideas, unemployment, gamification, and coworking**.

#### Happiness to Passion

- Over time, the ideal emotional state at work shifted from happiness to passion.
- In the **20th century, companies started valuing individuality, self-growth, and unique employee contributions**.
- Unlike the old authoritarian methods, the new focus on passion sees negative emotions as signs of a healthy relationship with work and potential for innovation and change.

#### Apathy

- Apathy is a lack of interest or emotion towards activities that would usually engage someone.
- The book examines the state of **serialised unemployment** in the United States, where **joblessness has been normalized** and **social welfare support has declined**.
- Apathy is seen as a symptom of a deeper issue stemming from long-term unemployment, showing indifference towards things that would usually spark interest.
- **Apathy is not just indifference but an adaptive response to prolonged unemployment**.
- **Apathy challenges capitalism** by preventing unemployed people from being forced into commodifiable labor.

- **Apathy, termed as "maladapted adaptation," stops individuals from being easily controlled, showing their resilience and tenacity.**

## Gamification

- Gamification uses game-design elements in non-game contexts, like the workplace, to make tasks more enjoyable and engaging.
- The book discusses case studies on how **gamification can reignite passion in work by offering a means of transposition, helping workers go beyond the limitations of surveillance capitalism and control mechanisms.**
- Gamification **fosters a state of detachment that becomes a source of optimism and resilience.** It helps workers numb their unhappiness and attach this numbness to desire, promoting a hopeful outlook.

## Co-working

- Co-working is a shared work environment where individuals, often freelancers or remote workers, use common office space and resources.
- The book looks at **co-working spaces like WeWork, which support middle-class freelancers dealing with economic instability and loneliness.**
- Co-working spaces are seen as **solutions to loneliness** and the changing values of the creative class, keeping work as a key part of a good life.
- Passion in co-working spaces is built through the environment, community practices, and the interactions between people and their surroundings.
- Passion and creativity arise from the collaborative efforts between individuals and their environment, involving both human and non-human factors.

## Conclusion

The **book "Passionate Work" redefines passion** in the workplace, suggesting a shift from traditional notions of passion to understanding it **as an external influence rather than an inner essence.** It encourages accepting the absence of passion and challenges the idea that passion shields against exploitation in corporate settings. The book critiques unsustainable work structures and slow productivity movements, offering valuable insights for management, sociology, and cultural studies. While it initiates important discussions, a broader range of resources could have enhanced its exploration of passion's role in ensuring a good life.

## What's the point of an AI candidate in Britain's general election?

June 18, 2024, Indian Express



### Chapter:

7 - Politics and Society

10 - Social Change in Modern Society

### Context

- The **concept of AI in politics** introduces a blend of **mathematical efficiency with democratic representation**.
- The idea challenges the traditional notion of democracy by integrating algorithmic computing power into political representation.
- *[Can be linked to the idea of "rationalization" (Max Weber), where efficiency and predictability are achieved through technological means.]*

### AI Steve: The AI Candidate

- **Steve Endacott**: Sussex businessman and chairman of Neural Voice, running for UK Parliament with AI avatar "AI Steve."
- **Role of AI Steve**: Acts as a co-pilot, providing a data-driven, always-available political representative.

### Features of AI Steve

- **Accessibility**: Available **24/7** to interact with constituents. **Responds to questions and gathers opinions in real-time**.
- *[Reflects "McDonaldization" (George Ritzer), emphasizing efficiency, calculability, and predictability in services.]*
- **Policy Formation**: Conducts **research on new topics**. Engages **in discussions with voters and incorporates their suggestions into policies**.
- *[Related to "deliberative democracy" (Jürgen Habermas), emphasizing the importance of informed and inclusive public discourse in policy-making.]*

### Potential and Pitfalls

- **Efficiency vs. Empathy**: AI can handle multiple interactions simultaneously, providing quick responses. **Human representatives bring empathy and moral judgment, which AI lacks**.
- **Bias in Algorithms**: Historical errors have shown that algorithms **can exhibit biases, such as racism and sexism**. Raises concerns about the neutrality and fairness of AI in politics.

## Conclusion

- AI candidates like Steve Endacott's avatar challenge traditional political leadership and may influence future democratic processes.
- *[Can be linked to Max Weber's concept of "rational-legal authority," where decisions are made based on rationality and rules rather than traditional or charismatic authority.]*
- The rise of AI in politics necessitates a careful examination of ethical implications and the role of human judgment in governance.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers

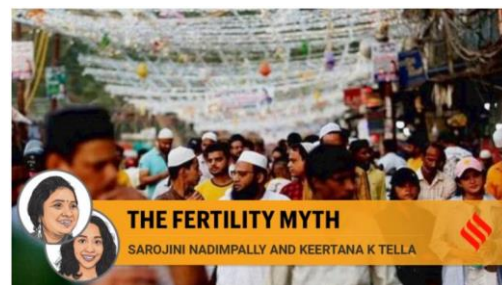
## Hamare Baarah and the myth of India's Muslim population 'explosion'

June 26, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

B-6 Religion and Society

C-6 Population Dynamics



### Context

- On June 13, the Supreme Court of India halted the release of the film "Hamare Baarah." The Bombay High Court later allowed its release on June 19, with modifications.
- The slogan "Hum Paanch, Hamare Pachchees" has been used to **portray Muslims as having large families**, fueling **fears of a Muslim population explosion**.
- [Reflects the concept of "moral panic" (Stanley Cohen), where societal fears are exaggerated around a perceived threat, often leading to discrimination against a particular group.]*

### Debunking the Myth of Population Explosion

- National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5)** conducted in **2019-20**, shows a **decline in** India's total fertility rate (TFR) **to 2.0**, below the replacement level of 2.1.
- [Reflects "demographic transition theory" (Warren Thompson), where societies progress through stages of birth and death rates leading to stabilization.]*
- Both **Economic Survey 2018-19 & SRS Data 2017** indicate a **deceleration in India's population growth**.
- As per 2011 Census** **Muslim population growth rate was higher than Hindu growth rate**, but the gap narrowed significantly from 2001 to 2011.
- The fertility rates between Hindus and Muslims are converging, with a faster decline in Muslim fertility rates. **By 2030, an "absolute convergence" is predicted.**
- NFHS Data** shows a decline in fertility rates across all religious communities over the past two decades. **Muslim fertility rate dropped from 4.4 in 1992-93 to 2.4 in 2020-21.**
- Pew Research Centre** **confirms the overall decline in fertility rates across religious groups** and the decreasing gap between them.

### Socio-economic Factors

- States with better education, healthcare, and socio-economic conditions (e.g., Kerala, Tamil Nadu) have lower TFRs compared to states like Bihar.
- [Reflects "human capital theory" (Gary Becker), emphasizing the role of education and health in economic productivity.]*
- Higher education levels correlate with lower fertility rates. **The NFHS 5 data also shows that the higher the level of the mother's education, the lower the fertility.**

- Muslims are economically disadvantaged with lower education and health levels, as noted in the Sachar Committee Report (2006).
- Education, economic development, healthcare, and gender justice are crucial in addressing fertility rates rather than focusing on religion.
- *[Aligned with "capability approach" (Amartya Sen), which emphasizes enhancing individuals' capabilities through socio-economic support.]*

## Rhetoric and Rights

- The false narrative of high Muslim fertility affects Muslim women's reproductive rights and dignity.
- It is essential to resist polarisation and misinformation by emphasizing facts, data, and reproductive rights.



**Sleepy Classes IAS**  
Awakening Toppers



## Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes: Collapse of trust in examination system amounts to a collapse in trust in system as a whole

June 25, 2024, Indian Express

### Chapter:

C-1 - Visions of Social Change in India

C-7 Challenges of Social Transformation

### Context

- **NEET Exam Scandal:** A significant breach of trust in India's high-stakes examination system, with widespread paper leaks from Gujarat to Bihar.
- **Systemic Issues:** Indicates deep systemic rot rather than isolated incidents, affecting millions of students.
- *[Reflects Robert Merton's concept of "strain theory," where individuals resort to alternative means to achieve socially approved goals.]*



### Examination System and Democratic Legitimacy

- The Indian Republic relies on **elections and exams** for **procedural legitimacy**.
- Both systems, despite potential distortions, are considered **fairer than other institutions**.
- They provide significant churn and mobility, contributing to hope and dreams.

### Importance of Exams in India

- **Legitimacy:** Exams provide a **legitimizing device**, ensuring students have earned their place.
- *[Reflects Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital," where educational credentials are key to social advancement.]*
- **Social Mobility:** They are crucial for **social mobility**, especially for those beating social and financial odds.
- **Meritocracy:** Exams are necessary for creating a single commensurate scale, essential for the **myth of meritocracy**.
- **Commensuration:** Despite criticisms, exams test ambition, concentration, endurance, commitment, and character.

### Challenges in the Examination System

- **Coaching Industry:**
  - High competition leads to a reliance on coaching centers, often compensating for inadequate regular education.

- Coaching can sometimes provide more effective teaching than regular institutions.
- *[Reflects "shadow education" (Mark Bray), where supplementary private tutoring complements formal education.]*
- **Psychological and Social Costs:**
  - Failure in the exam system can have devastating consequences, despite immense effort by students.
  - *[Connected to Herbert Spencer's "social Darwinism," where only the 'fittest' survive in a competitive educational environment.]*
  - The high stakes and low probabilities of success can lead to significant failures.
  - *[Related to "anomie" (Emile Durkheim), where societal expectations cause stress and disconnection.]*

## Centralisation and Its Consequences

- **Political Economy of Exams:** There has been little resistance to centralization, despite valid federalism concerns.
- **Distrust in Local Institutions:** Centralization stems from a lack of trust in state boards and universities. The central government's control over higher education has exacerbated this issue.
- **Impact on Governance:** Centralized exams like NEET and CUET increase uncertainty and hardship without clear pedagogical gains. The ease of acceptance of centralization highlights a deeper crisis of confidence in local institutions.

## Impact of the NEET Scandal

- **Erosion of Trust:** The NEET scandal signifies a collapse of trust in the examination system. This erosion of trust threatens the overall trust in Indian institutions.
- **Administrative Incompetence:** Governmental control combined with administrative inefficiencies has worsened the crisis. The scandal underscores the need for competent administration and transparent processes.

## Conclusion

- **Need for Re-evaluation:** Reviewing the necessity of national exams and considering decentralization to reduce the burden on agencies like NTA. Restoring trust in the examination system is crucial for maintaining the legitimacy and functionality of India's democratic structures.
- **Policy Implications:** Policymakers need to address the systemic issues within the examination system. Ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability in exams is essential for rebuilding trust.