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YOJANA SUMMARY

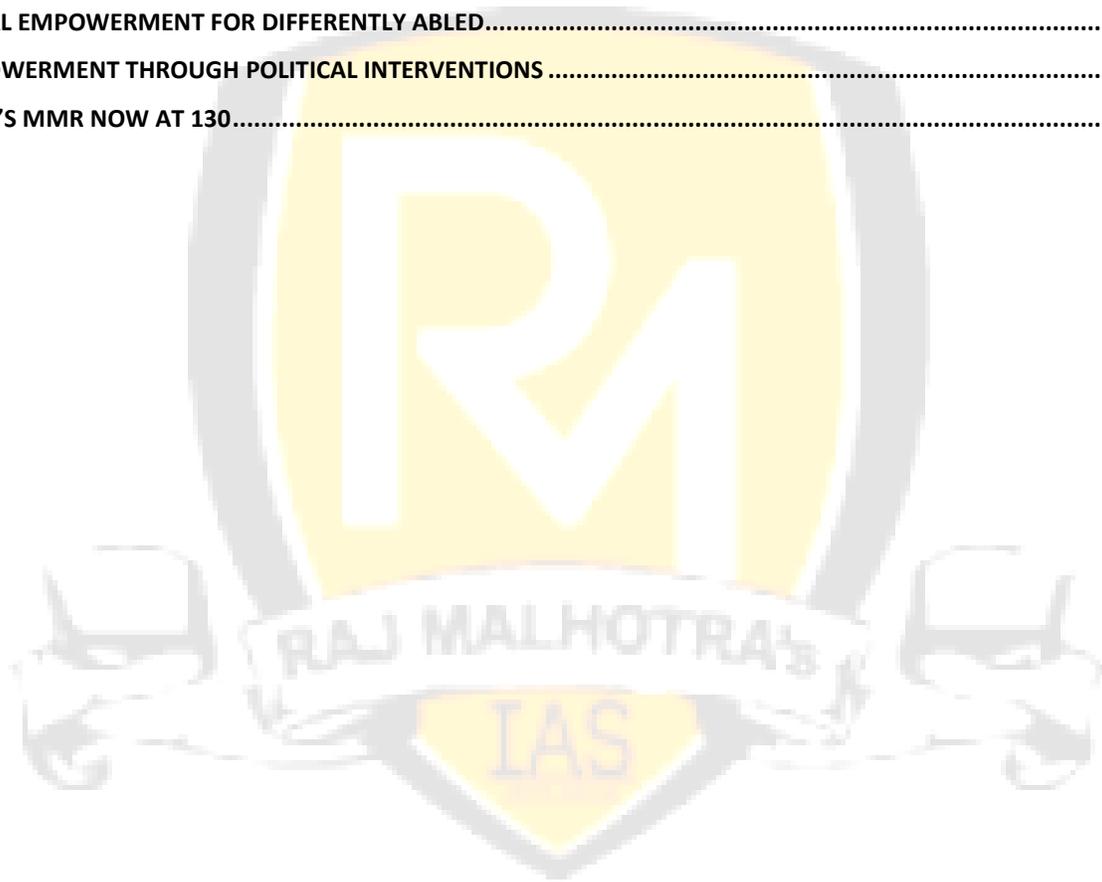


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INTRODUCTION

For a nation to grow it is a first and foremost requirement that all sections of the society are equally empowered. This can be achieved only when different plans and policies are integrated to ensure equitable growth opportunities and access to all.

1. **Women** - Government has taken steps like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Matritva Vandana Yojana.
2. **Marginalised** - Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhana Yojana, MUDRA, Venture Capital Fund Scheme, Start Up India, Stand Up India, Skill India.
3. **Senior Citizens** - Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana, Atal Pension Yojana, Vaya Vandana Yojana etc.
4. **Differently abled** - Accessible India Campaign, Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Schemes etc.
5. **Tribals** - National Fellowship and Scholarship for higher education for ST students, scheme for vocational training, Minimum Support Price for Minor Forest Produce, Scheme of development of particularly vulnerable tribal groups and Forest Rights Act.

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

The vision of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, in tune with our constitution, is to build an inclusive society where the most oppressed and backward sections of our population can live a life of dignity, pride and actively contribute to the nation's human capital.

These sections of the population are an important target group for the policies and programmes of the Government, and this focus has translated in the country wide missions such as the ongoing Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, Aspirational Districts Programme, the Mission Antyodaya etc.

Scheduled Caste Development -

- The flagship scheme of the Department, Post-Matric Scholarship (PMS-SC) for SC students has been in operation since 1944 and is the single largest intervention by the Government of India for the educational empowerment of scheduled caste students. It covers approximately 55 lakh students per year studying at the post-matriculation or post-secondary stage, right up to PhD.
- Other scholarship schemes for SC students are the Pre-Matric Scholarship, Top Class Education Scheme for studying in premier educational institutions and the National Fellowship Scheme run in conjunction with UGC.

Welfare of SCs -

- An important act for protection and dignity of members of SC and ST community is the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

- The department, apart from implementing schemes directly, also keeps track of the 'Allocation for the Welfare of SCs (AWSC), which is the new name of the SC Sub Plan. The concept of Special Component Plan (SCP) for Scheduled Castes is in existence since 1979-1980 to ensure proportionate flow of plan resources for the development of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (STs).
- The department has developed a web-portal (e-uthhan.gov.in) in 2017 for online capturing of data from various Ministries/Departments on the financial, physical and outcome based monitoring indicators as per the formats designed by the NITI Aayog. The financial monitoring has been linked with the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) and accordingly, the monitoring is carried out on a real time basis.
- Beyond education, the department has adopted an area based approach for the development of SC habitations, which focuses on education, health and nutrition, Swachh Bharat, livelihood and skill development.
- The Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY) envisages an integrated development of SC majority villages, primarily through convergent implementation of central and state schemes, by providing central gap-filing assistance. The programme is being taken up in villages which have more than 50 percent of SC population.

Backward Classes Development -

- Scholarship schemes remain the mainstay of interventions for the BC population too, with schemes such as Pre and Post-Matric Scholarships and the National Fellowship.
- Skill development is an important intervention and is being undertaken through the National Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC).

Social defence -

- Keeping in view the changing demographics, socio-economic needs of the senior citizens, social value systems and advancements in technologies, a revised policy for senior citizens is being drafted.
- The Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana is a scheme meant for providing living assisted devices to senior citizens belonging to BPL category.
- Under the scheme of Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drugs) Abuse, cost norms were increased by 30 percent for de-addiction centres supported by the department w.e.f 1st April, 2018. These centres have also been provided with cooks, full time doctors and an additional chowkidar. For the first time, a National Survey to identify victims of drug abuse has been also taken up.

Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers -

- A National Survey of Manual Scavengers in 170 identified districts of 18 states has been undertaken, coordinated and monitored by NSKFDC (National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation) in association with the representatives of State Government and social organisations.
- Further, the NSKFDC will focus on areas of training, rehabilitation and awareness generation. Emphasis is also being laid on spreading awareness about the provisions of the “Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013” by organising workshops in big municipalities with stakeholders including municipal engineers, sanitary inspectors, contractors etc.

- Engagement with municipal corporations is imperative to this scheme. Memorandum of Agreements with panchayats and municipal corporations to purchase sanitation related vehicles and equipment are being entered into.

Corporations -

- The department has three Finance Development Corporations viz. NBCFDC, NSKFDC and NSFDC (National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation).
- These corporations are not for profit companies with an objective to promote economic and developmental activities for the benefit of targeted groups and to assist them in livelihood, skill development and self-employment ventures.

Conclusion -

The Department is committed to fulfil the promise made in the Constitution, Article 38, to secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people, which is in keeping with the guiding principle of this government in 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas'.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES FOR WEAKER SECTIONS

The framers of the Indian Constitution have thought well in advance and ensured to provide adequate and mandatory provisions in the Constitution of India to provide justice in all aspects of life, equality in status, social security and economic/financial safeguards to the weaker sections of the society.

Background -

- As an initial step banks have been nationalised, provisions have been made for priority sector lending requirements for banks; lead bank scheme was introduced to ensure government policy initiatives to get shape in action. Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) have been established to provide last mile connectivity to the people in rural areas.
- Self-Help Groups (SHGs) bank linkage programmes were introduced to give a platform for needy people to come up with business and innovative ideas to self sustain and engage in gainful economic activities etc.

What is 'Financial Inclusion'?

Financial Inclusion is the process of ensuring access to financial services, timely and adequate credit for needy weaker sections and low income groups at an affordable rate.

Financial inclusion has become a top policy priority of the Central Government to ensure egalitarian society, as the substantial population of India lives with economic insecurity.

Barriers for Financial Inclusion -

- Bharati D.B. (2016) observes that from the demand side, the reasons identified in the study for the financial exclusion are low income, poverty and illiteracy and lack of awareness. From the supply side, branch proximity, timings, cumbersome documentation and procedures, attitude of the bank staff and language are the reasons cited.
- Charan Singh (2014) observes that mobile number registration and pin number generation is a big deterrent for customers along with financial illiteracy. Access channels, coordination with mobile service operators are other challenges for banks.

Financial Inclusion and the Government -

- 1. National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSCFDC)** - It was set up by the Government of India in February, 1989. For the broad objective to finance, facilitate and mobilise funds for the economic empowerment of Scheduled Caste communities living below the Double the Poverty Line (DPL) limit. The NSDFC extends loans (Term Loans, Micro Finance and Education/Vocational Education and Training) at concessional rates to Scheduled Castes (SCs) living below the DPL.
- 2. National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC)** - It was established in 2001 to provide concessional financial assistance to scheduled tribes for their economic and educational development. It assists Self Help Groups and extends financial assistance for projects having unit cost upto Rs 25 lakhs per SHG.
- 3. National Safaikaramcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC)** - A not-for-profit organisation established in 1997 to disburse the funds to the state channelising agencies (SCAs) nominated by the concerned State Governments/UT Administrations and to Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Nationalised Banks for onward disbursement of the funds to the beneficiaries.
- 4. National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC)** - It is a Government of India undertaking under the aegis of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The company is a not for profit with an objective to promote economic and development activities for the benefit of Backward Classes and to assist the poorer section of these classes in skill development and self employment ventures.

5. **National Minorities Finance and Development Corporation (NMDFC)** - It was incorporated in 1994 with the mandate to provide concessional finance to the Minorities for self-employment/income generation activities. Under NMDFC programme, preference is given to artisans and women.
6. **National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHDFC)** - The NHDFC had been set up by Government of India to play a catalytic role in economic empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). The corporation has been extending financial assistance for the benefit of PwDs for their economic empowerment and help them rise up the economic/social ladder.
7. **Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)** - It is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The main objective is to provide micro-credit to poor women for various livelihood support and income generating activities at concessional terms in a client friendly procedure to bring about their socio-economic development.
8. **MUDRA Yojana** - It aims to provide upto 10 lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises.
9. **Stand-Up India Scheme** - Facilitates bank loans between 10 lakh and 1 crore to at least one Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch for setting up a Greenfield Enterprise.
10. **Venture Capital Fund Scheme** - To promote entrepreneurship in India among the Scheduled Castes by providing concessional finance to them.
11. **Credit Enhancement Guarantee Scheme** - Aimed towards credit enhancement facility for young and start-up entrepreneurs, belonging to Scheduled Castes, with an

objective to encourage entrepreneurship in the lower strata of the society resulting in job creation besides creating confidence in Scheduled Castes.

12. **Prime Minister Jan Dhana Yojana** - To ensure financial inclusion of weaker sections of the society for providing banking, pension and insurance to reduce the negative effects of earlier schemes, thus giving them financial freedom and stability.

Conclusion -

These schemes clearly highlight that the government is committed to the cause of inclusive empowerment of weaker sections of the society.

SOCIAL CHANGE AMONG SCs AND STs

The Constitution had recognised the less privileged and more disadvantaged groups and extended special safeguards and affirmative measures such as anti-discrimination, anti-atrocity and positive discrimination laws such as prohibition of the practice of untouchability, protection of right to the land and habitation, provision of scholarships and reservations in education and employment and more recently, ear-marking sub-plans in Union and State budgets cutting across various departments of the Government for improving the lot of both the SCs and STs.

The stricter implementation of reservations in higher education and in government jobs have motivated more and more first generation SCs and STs to break the glass-ceiling of social mobility, thereby empowering them in all aspects - social, economic and political.

The major effect of social empowerment of the disadvantaged is that it had increased their aspirations to get good and relevant education for employment. The enrolments in elementary education have increased too. The dropout rates came down significantly too and the rates of retention have improved at various levels.

Higher Education Participation -

- The process of social and economic empowerment had increased participation of SCs and STs in higher education, which is a passport to better life, social status and economic opportunities.
- The period between the years 2000 and 2015 have witnessed a higher rate of growth of higher education participation rates for all groups, more so for SCs. Women from SCs and STs too have benefited tremendously from this boom.
- A case in point is the way the SCs/STs are able to fill in the jobs at the top end of the civil services and also seeking to transform their representation in once elite professional courses such as engineering, medicine, law and university teaching. Subsequently, this has resulted in restructuring the middle class, professional occupational profile of these castes and tribes in the recent times.
- The transition from low status, traditional to high status, modern occupations has brought forth considerable social change and dignity among the SCs and STs.
- Another development that is observed in the post liberalisation era is that more and more educated SC/ST professionals are going abroad for higher education and for employment, and are also setting up diasporic groups in their host countries, which signifies tremendous social and economic empowerment the disadvantaged have attained.

Challenges -

1. The adverse effect of the growing process of privatisation of higher education on the socially disadvantaged is significant as it seems to limit social mobility prospects among aspiring SCs and STs.
 - a. First, since much of the growth of higher education in the post 2000s is in private higher professional education, it is not accessible to large sections of SCs and STs as it does not facilitate reservations as mandated in the Constitution.
 - b. Second, as there are no reservations in private sector where large scale employment opportunities are currently found, SCs and STs are either left out or become educated unemployed.
2. Moreover, the gender parity among all groups (in particular among SCs and STs) remains a serious issue. While participation of women in higher education had increased, it remains far behind men. Importantly, SC and ST women from urban areas fare much better than their rural counterparts, which means that the bulk of women are not benefiting from the social change that is occurring through widened access to higher education.
3. Another cause of concern amidst such a dismal picture of educated employment scenario is that the jobs in the government sector have consistently shrunk and are not expanding as a result of growing trends of privatisation in post liberalisation era. And in private sector employment, there are no reservations which then makes the process of empowerment of educated SCs and STs slow or even stunted. Lack of employability

among the SCs and STs, therefore, would also lead to further disinterest in education among these social groups.

Conclusion -

The grounds for change are already laid out and the SC and ST communities are becoming conscious of importance of education more and more, which then helps in realising an egalitarian higher education system and society.

FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG THE MARGINALISED

India has strategically initiated interventions to create economic empowerment opportunities for every stratum; yet there remains much scope for initiating programmes to uplift vulnerable sections of society who lack vital social capital to move up the social and economic ladder. A study conducted by Pratham for NITI Aayog suggests that, “about 70 percent of respondents who come from semi-urban or rural areas aspire to become ‘self-employed’ entrepreneurs, in stark contrast to their urban counterparts. The findings reiterate the fact that the country’s youth especially in the rural regions are gearing up for entrepreneurship to overcome poverty and employment.

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Report 2016-17 finds an increase in the rate of ‘entrepreneurial intention’ to 14.9 percent compared to 9 percent 2015-16, whereas the ‘fear of failure’ declined from 44 percent in 2015-16 to 37.5 percent in 2016-17. The GEM Report 2016-17 finds that nearly 44 percent of the adults in India see ‘good opportunities to start a business’ while 44 percent perceive they have ‘capabilities to start a business’.

Challenges and opportunities -

1. Lack of education and skills is a major impediment among the marginalised. Entrepreneurship motivation and skill development with hands-on training can address these deficiencies.
2. Shortage of finance, fear of risk and lack of functional literacy are some of the reasons that hold them back from starting their own enterprises.
3. Post-1990 reforms in India have resulted in sporadic rise of Dalit entrepreneurs in the country but their representation in the ownership of private enterprises and the employment generated by them has remained very slow for the Scheduled Caste communities. The Scheduled Caste owners are unable to overcome the barriers to entrepreneurship which owners belonging to OBCs are able to surpass. Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce (DICCI) has taken several laudable initiatives to empower the youth from the marginalised communities.

Response from Government -

1. **Start-Up India Programme** - As part of the start-up India action plan, the Government of India had set up a Fund of Funds for Start-ups (FFS) with a corpus of Rs 10,000 crores to support these companies over the next four years. The money is stated to be disbursed via the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).
2. **Stand-Up India Initiative** - Under Stand-up India initiative, around 1.25 lakh bank branches are encouraged to fund SC/ST and women entrepreneurs to create around 2.5 lakh new entrepreneurs in the country. The idea is to facilitate bank loans from 10 lakhs

to 100 lakhs to be given by each bank branch to one SC/ST and one Woman under Start-up India scheme to promote entrepreneurship among them.

- 3. The Mudra Scheme (Pradhan Mantri's Mudra Yojana) -** Mudra provides funding support to financial institutions that lend small loans to the micro-units in the country. A Credit Guarantee Fund for Micro Units was also commissioned to provide payment against default in micro loans extended by banks, NBFCs, MFIs and other FI intermediaries. The micro-loans have been categorised and named 'Shishu', 'Kishor' and 'Tarun' according to the phase of growth of the firm and its corresponding funding needs.
- 4. Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) -** It was announced during the budget session of 2014-15 to motivate rural youngsters to take up self-employment opportunities with the help of state-sponsored financial support. Mainly the SVEP has been designed to bolster the rural economy and achieve financial inclusion through micro-credit loans and mentoring support.

Conclusion -

It is fair to conclude that promoting entrepreneurship abilities among the marginalised and socially backward sections of our nation (especially those who fall under the intersections of the discriminatory forces i.e. the lower-caste disabled women) can lead to multidimensional progress both on the social and economic fronts. It could be used as an effective affirmative action tool to counter the social malaise of discrimination.

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT FOR DIFFERENTLY ABLED

In India, disabled persons are still oppressed, marginalised and denied the opportunity for full citizenship and participation, and from living a reasonable quality of life because of society's persistent stereotypical and prejudiced perception of them as inferior, incapable, inadequate, and a burden on the family resources and society.

As per Census 2011, the number of persons with Disabilities in India is 268.14 lakhs constituting 2.21 percent of the total population.

Government initiative -

A separate Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities was carved out of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on May 12, 2012. One of the main objectives of this department is rehabilitation at various aspects including social empowerment such as ADIP, SIPDA, DDRS along with other schemes.

1. **Assistance to Disabled Persons - ADIP Scheme** was launched on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 2014. Under the scheme, grants in aids of Rs 430 crores have been utilised during the last three years benefiting 7.03 lakhs PwDs in terms of providing aids/appliances for them to achieve more autonomy and mobility to facilitate social participation and inclusion.
2. **Technology Development Projects in Mission Mode** - Started in 1990-91. Under the scheme, suitable R&D projects are identified and funded for developing aids and appliances. The scheme is implemented through the IITs, Educational Institutes,

Research Agencies and Voluntary Organisations etc. Financial assistance is provided on 100 percent basis.

3. **Inclusive Education for the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS)** - This scheme supports children with disabilities aged 14 or above for completing their secondary education from class 9 to class 12 in government, local body and government aided schools. The scheme provides for identification of children with disabilities moving from elementary school to secondary and providing them with aids and appliances for their disabilities, access to learning material, transport facilities, hostel facilities, scholarships, books, assistive technologies and provision of scribes and readers.
4. **Accessible India Campaign** - Launched by Prime Minister on 3.12.2015 for creating universal accessibility for PwDs in built environment, transport, information and communication technology (ICT) ecosystem. This campaign is based on the principles of social model of disability, that disability is caused by the way society is organised and not the person's limitation and impairments.
5. **Implementation of Persons with Disabilities Act (SIPDA)** - It is a wide ranging scheme, under which financial assistance is given for skill development, creation of barrier free environment, running some institutions in the field and other related activities relating to implementation of the Act.
6. **Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)** - Financial assistance is provided to NGOs for projects relating to rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.
7. **Information, Communication and Technology (ICT)** - A mobile app will be launched to provide information on disabled-friendly public utilities in a city. Mobile communication also provides people with disabilities with many new possibilities; new

devices are constantly developed in this field, such as speech-recognition programmes for the computer. It will feature places like ATMs, banks, malls, toilets and will also have user-generated ratings of how disabled-friendly those places are. Government is also planning to introduce set top boxes to make TV programmes more useful for persons with visual impairment.

8. **Awareness Generation and Publicity** - The scheme was launched in 2014 with the objective of providing wide publicity including event based publicity etc. through electronic, print, film media, multi media to the schemes and programmes being run by the Central and State Governments for the welfare of persons with disabilities.

Conclusion -

Social empowerment is typically implemented at the four following levels -

1. The individual level - where the person values him/herself and actively wants to participate in life.
2. Family level - where the family gets guidance and support for social rehabilitation of their members with disabilities.
3. Community level - where awareness programme can be conducted.
4. Social policies level - impacting local and national level actions to promote social equity and inclusion of all persons with disabilities.

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH POLITICAL INTERVENTIONS

Empowerment has been defined as ‘the expansion of people’s capabilities and choices, the ability to exercise choice based on freedom from hunger, want and deprivation; and the opportunity to participate in, or endorse, decisions that affect their lives.’ Empowerment involves two important aspects: developing capabilities, negotiating skills and the ability of people on the one hand; and obtaining authority to make decisions or participate in decision making on affairs that affect their lives on the other.

Empowerment necessarily demands political inclusion in the institutions of decision making and a change in the existing power relations, where certain sections of society remain outside the decision-making arena due to their specific historical socio-cultural experience.

Political representation of marginalised or excluded groups in the institutions of governance will provide them with substantial power to change the rules of the game and also to negotiate the power relations with the privileged sections of society.

Marginalised sections -

- The vulnerable and marginalised groups in India are not distinct and easily identifiable. With low literacy, abject poverty, complex social-ethnic environment, the poor and the vulnerable are mired in historical suppression and subordination over the generations.
- The Constitution provides protective and preferential treatment to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, including the right to be treated equally and affirmative action in the form of reservations in educational institutions and public sector. It also prohibits any

practice of discriminating or excluding individuals from social interaction, public places or even physical contact against these groups.

Historical background -

Mahatma Gandhi strongly believed in Gram Swaraj. According to him, the villages should be governed by themselves through elected Panchayats to become self sufficient. Due to Gandhiji's interventions village panchayats were included in Article 40 of the Directive Principles of State Policy.

73rd Constitutional Amendment -

- In September 1991, the Panchayati Raj Bill was introduced and later it was passed in 1992 as the 73rd Amendment Act with minor modifications and came into force on 24th April, 1993. The significant feature of this act is that it gave constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions and it became mandatory to all the state governments to implement this act. This Amendment brought uniformity in structure, composition, powers and functions of PRIs.
- The act provided a three-tier system of panchayat at village, intermediate and district levels.
- A landmark feature of the act is that in all the panchayats, seats should be reserved for SCs and STs in proportion to their population and 1/3rd of the total number of seats will be reserved for women.

Marginalised Sections in PRIs -

- At present, seventeen states are implementing 50 percent reservation to women at all levels of Panchayati Raj. It has brought about a virtual democratic revolution with more than 50 lakh representatives getting elected at local level every five years; out of which 13 lakh are women and more than 5.5 lakh are Scheduled Castes.
- The elected representatives of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are actively participating in decision-making and implementation of different pro-poor programmes at panchayati level.
- Article 243D also specifies the mandatory rotations i.e. the structural constraints of reservation of seats among constituencies from one election to the next election in the 3-tier Panchayati Raj system. Though the act failed to provide second term to the contestants in the same constituency but it has helped the same group/community to contest in neighbouring constituency under reservation.
- Tamil Nadu government has issued orders to conduct the Gram Sabha on 26 January, 15 August, 1 May and 2 October every year without fail. Another significant feature in Madhya Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act is that they should conduct more than sixteen Gram Sabha meetings annually.
- It has enabled them to participate in all matters connected with the society on an egalitarian basis. They are invited to participate in all the social functions of the panchayati raj.

Marginalised Sections: Challenges -

- The states such as Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan have also introduced the two-child

norm as eligibility criteria for contesting elections. Though this norm goes against both men and women, it is more detrimental to women especially to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribe community.

- The continuance of traditional/dominant groups in rural India and the constitutional provisions of 73rd Amendment have intensified the antagonistic or conflict ridden rural sanitation which results in, more often than not, the violations of human rights on mass scale including violence, bloodshed and loss of life.

Conclusion -

Despite all the challenges there are still some issues which need to be addressed sincerely like sharing of power with women. A positive step in this direction would give impetus to the empowerment of women in PRIs, particularly of the marginalised communities.

INDIA'S MMR NOW AT 130

Our country has made a major accomplishment of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target 5.1 of 'reducing Maternal Mortality Ratio' by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015. As per the latest Sample Registration System (SRS) data India's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) stands at 130/lakh live births - a decline of massive 37 points from 167/lakh live births in 2011-13.

What is MMR?

MMR is defined as the number of maternal deaths from any cause related to or aggravated by pregnancy or its management (excluding accidental or incidental causes) during pregnancy and childbirth or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, per 1,00,000 live births, for a specified year.

Significance of MMR -

MMR is a reflection for the whole national health system and represents the outcome of its cons and pros along with its other characteristics such as intersectoral collaboration, transparency and disparities. Beyond these, it also illustrates even the socio-cultural, political and economic philosophy of a society.

Significance of achievement -

- It implies that India has shown impressive gains in reduction of maternal mortality with a 22 percent reduction in MMR since 2013.
- There are now nearly 12,000 fewer annual maternal deaths in 2016 as compared to 2013.
- This means that every day, 30 women are now being saved from pregnancy related deaths in India as compared to 2013.
- The top three states to contribute to this achievement are Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Assam with more than 60 point decline in their MMRs.
- In percentage terms, the states of Uttar Pradesh/Uttarakhand (29 percent), Kerala (25 percent) and Madhya Pradesh/Chhattisgarh (22 percent) have shown a decline in MMR that is greater than or equal to the national average of 22 percent.

Ensuring Emergency Care -

1. To increase the demand i.e. bring pregnant women to health facilities for ensuring safe delivery and emergency obstetric care, Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) scheme is being implemented.
2. The Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK) ensures that every pregnant woman delivering at government health centres gets facilities like free drugs, free diagnostics, free diet, free delivery and Caesarean Section, free to and fro transportation.
3. Funds are being provided for strengthening of 'Delivery Points' for provision of comprehensive Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn Child Health and Adolescent (RMNCH+A) services.
4. In order to provide state-of-the-art and outstanding quality care to pregnant women and children 100/50/30 bedded Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Wings have been sanctioned in public health facilities with high bed occupancies.
5. Another important component of infrastructure is to ensure adequate and safe supply of blood and blood components and for this 933 blood banks and 1352 blood storage centers have been made functional.
6. Approximately 10 lakh Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) have been engaged through recruitment and capacity building.

Continuum of Care Approach -

A strategic approach to RMNCH+A, iron and folic acid supplementation is being given across life stages including pregnant, lactating women and adolescent girls at health facilities and

during outreach activities. The Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan was launched in 2016 to ensure quality antenatal care to pregnant women in the country on the 9th of every month. Harnessing IT in healthcare, Mother and Child Trafficking (MCTS) and Mother and Child Trafficking Facilitation Centre (MCTFC) have been introduced.

Conclusion -

Our country is poised to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for maternal mortality before the global target date of 2030. To ensure we do so, the states need to now focus on factors that are their unique challenges.

