PART-A

Answer the following in 200 words each.

1. How can we build gender issues in policy making? Explain.
Ans: Equal participation of women and men in politics is an important condition for effective democracy and good governance. Apart from strengthening and enhancing the democratic system, the participation of more women in political decision-making has many positive effects on society that can help improve the lives of women and men. Benefits include more equitable societies and inclusive governance, higher standards of living, positive development in education, health and infrastructure, and a decrease in political corruption.

Though the Parliament of India has a Committee for Empowerment of Women, it is not much more than tokenism. The committee has a limited mandate and hardly goes beyond filing standard reports suggesting minor improvements to existing women welfare programmes.

The first takeaway is that the committee be revamped along the lines of RWPF and be provided a constitutional mandate to look into gender policy of every major governmental action. After which, the Parliament must legislate a Women Reservation Bill to effectively increase the gender representation across the highest legislative bodies in the country.

Secondly, Section 149 of the Companies Act requires women to be included in the board of directors of companies. However, a recent study by Deloitte has shown that only 12% of boards are filled with women representatives. The private sector is rife with gender bias including allegations of a culture of sexual harassment and silence around it. Only strong women leaders can empower women working in the private labour market and therefore, the private sector, including nonprofit organisations, must introspect about the lack of gender parity at the leadership level.

Finally, the National Commission for Women, a statutory body that plays an advisory role to the Government of India, must be expanded to include women from the development sector, private sector and various regions of the country. It must function as a truly representative apex body for all issues related to gender parity. The National Commission for Women must also work to recommend adoption of gender sensitive laws and take the lead on studying international best practices.

2. What are the “Gender Blind Programmes”? Analyze any two government programmes from a gender perspective to explain whether the programmes are gender blind/ gender aware.

Ans: A Gender Blind Programmes is frequently gender-biased in its assumptions and its implications and there is sufficient evidence to suggest that poor men and women in India do not have the same credit needs or face the same credit constraints.

Two government programmes from a gender perspective to explain whether the programmes are gender blind/ gender aware are:

1 Integrated Rural Development Programme – A Gender-blind Approach
The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was conceived in India in the policy climate of a high level of dependency of the rural poor on high interest informal credit. IRDP was initiated on October 2, 1980 in 5011 blocks in the country. During the five year period (1980-85) in each block, 600 poor families were to be assisted. In this way, 75 million persons were tar geted to be beneficiaries. The allocation was shared between centre and state on 50: 50 basis.

2 Watershed Development Programme: A Gender-blind Approach
Watershed development refers to the conservation, regeneration and the judicious use of all the resources – natural (like land, water, plants, animals) and human – within a particular watershed. Watershed management tries to bring about the best possible balance in the environment between natural resources on the one side and man and grazing animals on the other. It requires people’s participation because those who destroy it would have to want to regenerate and conserve it.

3. How do you address the needs of the women belonging to special categories through gender planning? Explain.
Ans: Some of the ways to implement gender-responsive planning include:

- Addressing issues facing the planning and development of communities, cities, regions, states and the nation related to the changing roles of women and men as a means of promoting social equity;
- Creating a national network of planners, decision makers and persons actively involved in organizations which are concerned about women’s empowerment;
- Promoting professional growth of women in planning and advocating for equitable treatment and advancement of female planners at all stages of their careers;
- Recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of women in planning;
- Advancing technical knowledge and improving techniques of dealing with the issues of women and planning; and
- Promoting the analysis and examination of the issues of women and planning at every level of government and in colleges and universities.

It is in this context that gender-responsive budgets come into play. A budget is the most comprehensive statement of a government’s social and economic plans and priorities. In tracking where the money comes from and where it goes, budgets determine how public funds are raised, how they are used and who benefits from them. Therefore, implementing commitments towards gender equality...