

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 1 Indian Society – Salient features of society

Inequality Unveiled: The Cumulative Ravages of Disparity

Inequality is the state of not being equal, particularly in terms of status, rights, and opportunities. There are various types of inequality, including:

1. **Gender Inequality:** Involves unequal treatment or perceptions based on gender. An example is Iceland's Prime Minister participating in a strike against the gender pay gap, highlighting the persistence of this issue even in countries with reputations for gender equality.
2. **Caste Inequality:** Discrimination based on caste, prevalent in India. Figures like B R Ambedkar have historically fought against caste discrimination, advocating for the complete eradication of caste to achieve genuine political and economic reforms.
3. **Cultural Inequality:** Refers to unequal opportunities and treatment in the cultural or creative sectors. The recent Hollywood strike, where technicians, writers, and actors protest against earnings disparities and technological threats, exemplifies challenges faced by those not in the spotlight.
4. **Corporate Inequality:** Evident in unfair practices within corporations. Instances like Qantas illegally sacking 1,700 workers and issues of disproportionate executive pay illustrate this form of inequality.

Issues associated with inequality include:

- **Gender Inequality Consequences:** Limited opportunities for women, leading to lower pay, underrepresentation in leadership roles, and increased incidents of gender-based violence and discrimination.
- **Impact of Caste Inequality:** Hinders social and economic mobility, perpetuates poverty, and limits access to education and jobs for lower caste groups, fostering social divisions and discrimination.
- **Cultural Inequality Effects:** Creates disparities in recognition and rewards within the cultural sector, resulting in insecurity among lesser-known artists and technicians, and limiting diversity in cultural expressions.
- **Corporate Inequality Ramifications:** Results in worker dissatisfaction, strikes, legal challenges, a lack of trust in corporate leadership, and a decrease in employee morale and productivity.

Steps to address inequality include:

- **Reducing Cultural Disparities:** Support equitable treatment and opportunities in cultural sectors, exemplified by the Hollywood workers' strike for fair earnings and against the impact of technology.
- **Correcting Corporate Injustices:** Practice empathetic and understanding leadership in corporations, ensuring fair treatment of workers, as highlighted by cases like Qantas's illegal worker sacking.

- **Tackling Gender Inequality:** Follow proactive steps, such as Iceland's leadership-led strikes, to address gender pay gaps and combat sexual violence.

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