

**UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 2 Social Justice – Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections.**

## **Ensuring Child Safety: Reporting Animal Cruelty as a Protective Measure Against Child Abuse**

**Reasons Behind Child Abuse in India:**

### **1. Structure and Size of the Family:**

- Traditional hierarchical family structures, where elders hold significant authority, may lead to harsh disciplinary measures, bordering on abuse. Larger families might expose children to neglect, increasing vulnerability.

### **2. Lack of Effective Law Implementation:**

- Weak enforcement of laws and insufficient victim support systems can impede the prevention of child abuse cases.

### **3. Poverty:**

- Economic instability can strain families, making children more susceptible to neglect or abuse as basic needs become challenging to meet.

### **4. Lack of Awareness:**

- Limited recognition of abusive behaviors and awareness of where to seek help contribute to the prevalence of child abuse.

### **5. Cultural Factors:**

- Traditional beliefs and societal norms may normalize or dismiss certain forms of abuse as disciplinary actions, perpetuating the idea that children are parental property.

### **6. Illiteracy:**

- Limited education and awareness about child rights, parenting practices, and the impact of abuse contribute to its persistence.

### **7. Gender Inequality:**

- Deep-rooted gender biases can lead to differential treatment of boys and girls, leaving some children more susceptible to various forms of abuse.

**Unexplored Link: Child Abuse and Animal Cruelty:**

### **How are animal cruelty and child abuse linked?**

- Children are at risk in households that abuse their family pets.
- In a New Jersey study, animal abuse and child abuse co-occurred in 88% of cases.
- Threats and violence towards animals coerce children into compliance, preventing them from reporting the abuser.

**What Should Be Done:**

**1. Early Identification of Homes with Animal Abuse:**

- Detection of animal abuse, easier to identify than child abuse, can serve as circumstantial evidence in custody and child abuse hearings.

**2. Empirical Studies:**

- Conduct empirical studies in India to assess the link between animal cruelty and child abuse.

**3. Collection of Data:**

- Include data on offences under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, in National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) records.

**4. Enforcing Anti-Cruelty Laws:**

- Reporting and consistently enforcing anti-cruelty laws can deter further acts of violence against both animals and humans.

**5. Collaboration by Stakeholders:**

- Encourage collaboration between stakeholders in child protection and animal protection movements to collectively reduce abuse.

**UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper2- Governance- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education.**

**Challenges in Board Exams: Safeguarding Education from the Distortions of Exam-Centric Mark Pursuits in India**

**Main Issues with Board Exams in India:**

**1. Stress Due to High Stakes:**

- Board exams induce intense stress among students and families. Results are socially perceived as a measure of intrinsic worth, and the competitive nature of admissions into limited high-quality higher education institutions amplifies this stress.

**2. Focus on Rote Learning:**

- Predominantly testing memory rather than practical skills or understanding, board exams contribute to a narrow assessment of students' actual knowledge and abilities, encouraging rote learning.

**3. Inconsistent Evaluation:**

- Poorly designed and executed exams lead to inconsistent evaluation, raising concerns about their overall reliability and effectiveness.

**4. Rise of Coaching Culture:**

- The pressure to excel has given rise to a pervasive coaching and tuition culture,

emphasizing exam preparation over genuine learning and understanding.

### Initiatives to Overcome These Issues:

#### National Curriculum Framework (NCF) Initiatives:

##### 1. Competency-Based Assessment:

- Introducing exams that assess competencies and skills instead of rote memorization.

##### 2. Multiple Exam Opportunities:

- Allowing students to take exams at least twice a year, with a move towards on-demand exams to reduce the impact of a single day's performance on their future.

##### 3. Reduction in Content Load:

- Decreasing the volume of content in subjects to enable a greater focus on understanding concepts.

##### 4. Revised Exam Design:

- Addressing misdirected exam design by shifting the focus from rote memorization to fostering real learning, affecting teaching methods, classroom practices, and textbook content.

#### National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 Efforts:

##### 1. Expansion of Higher Education:

- Addressing the shortage of high-quality higher education institutions to alleviate the intense competition for college admissions.

##### 2. Common University Entrance Test:

- Implementing a standardized test for university admissions to streamline the process and reduce the emphasis on board exam scores.

#### Recommendations:

##### 1. Improving Teaching Methodologies:

- Training teachers to adopt pedagogical methods aligned with the revised curriculum, focusing on competencies rather than rote memorization.

##### 2. Regularizing Standardized Assessments:

- Developing a consistent and standardized approach to assessments throughout the academic year to reduce the singular focus on final board exams.

##### 3. Enhanced Focus on Mental Health:

- Addressing the psychological impact of board exams by incorporating mental health support and counseling in schools.

##### 4. Strengthening Higher Education Linkages:

- Establishing stronger connections between school education and higher education criteria to ensure a smoother transition for students.

**5. Public Sensitization and Information Campaigns:**

- Conducting campaigns to inform the public about new educational reforms, emphasizing the shift towards competency and skill-based education.

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**Ensuring Child Safety: Reporting Animal Cruelty as a Protective Measure Against Child Abuse**

According to the Reserve Bank of India's 2022 report, freebies are defined as items or services provided free of charge as a public welfare measure. They are differentiated from broader welfare goods like health and education, presenting a challenge in making such distinctions.

**Reasons for the Use of Freebies by Political Parties:**

**1. Freebies as Welfare Measures:**

- Political parties view freebies as part of their welfare measures, considering them integral to their political mandate and including them in their election manifestos.

**2. Voter Appeal:**

- Freebies, such as cash transfers and smartphones, are attractive to voters, offering immediate and tangible benefits that prove effective in winning support.

**3. Simplification of Messaging:**

- In the complex arena of electoral politics, freebies provide a simple and easily communicable message. Compared to nuanced policy discussions, direct benefits are straightforward to explain and understand.

**4. Show Quick Results:**

- Long-term developmental projects are often complex and time-consuming. Freebies, being easier to deliver, show quick results, which is advantageous for parties in power seeking to demonstrate their effectiveness.

**5. Not Considered Corrupt Practice:**

- The Supreme Court ruling in the S. Subramaniam Balaji vs. State of Tamil Nadu case determined that political parties are within their rights to make electoral promises, including the distribution of consumer goods. Making such promises is not considered a corrupt practice, further supporting the arguments made by political parties in favor of freebies.

**Harmful Effects of Freebies to the Nation:**

**1. Financial Strain on State Finances:**

- Offering freebies can lead to fiscal irresponsibility, straining state budgets as highlighted by the RBI. This may hinder the government's ability to provide basic amenities.

**2. Undermining Party Platforms:**

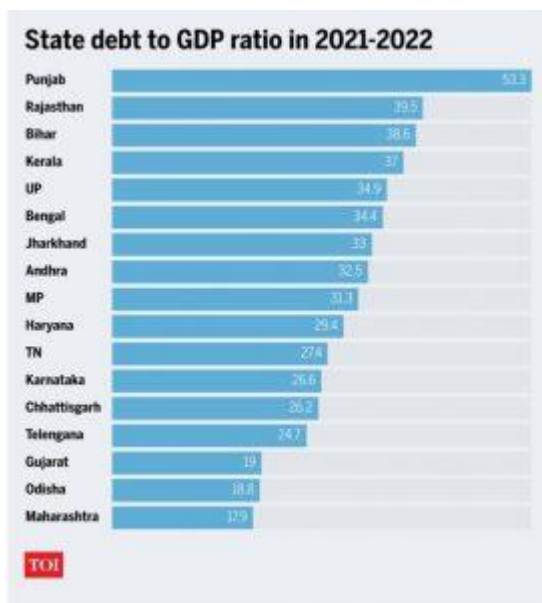
- Excessive reliance on freebies can erode the ideological framework of political parties, shifting focus from comprehensive policy-making to short-term benefits, weakening the party's foundational principles.

**3. Creating Unsustainable Expectations:**

- The trend of offering larger benefits with each election creates unsustainable expectations among voters, leading to a fiscal race to the bottom where parties promise more without regard for long-term fiscal health.

**4. Reducing Credibility:**

- Overemphasis on freebies can diminish a party's credibility, suggesting a lack of substantial policies and reliance on short-term tactics for voter appeal.



State	As % of GDP	As % of revenue receipts	As % of own tax revenue
Andhra Pradesh	2.1%	14.1%	30.30%
Bihar	0.1%	0.6%	2.70%
Haryana	0.1%	0.6%	0.90%
Jharkhand	1.7%	8.0%	26.70%
Kerala	0.0%	0.0%	0.10%
Madhya Pradesh	1.6%	10.8%	28.80%
Punjab	2.7%	17.8%	45.40%
Rajasthan	0.6%	3.9%	8.60%
West Bengal	1.1%	9.5%	23.80%

**Recommendations for Addressing Freebie Culture:**

**1. Fiscal Responsibility:**

- Implement the Election Commission of India's proposal for political parties to disclose the financial impact of their manifesto promises. This transparency will facilitate the evaluation of freebies against their trade-offs, ensuring fiscal responsibility and preventing the strain on budgets.

**2. Clear Distinction:**

- Establish a clear distinction between public goods and freebies. This differentiation is essential to prevent the misuse of public funds for short-term electoral gains, fostering a more responsible and sustainable approach to governance.

**3. Attitudinal Change:**

- Initiate an attitudinal change by delivering robust political and moral education at all levels. This educational focus should emphasize the importance of responsible governance, discouraging the expectation and reliance on short-term giveaways.

**4. Governance Focus:**

- Shift the focus of governance towards the execution of policies that offer long-term benefits, such as infrastructure development and job creation. Prioritizing sustainable initiatives over short-term freebies can contribute to the overall development of the nation.

Addressing the freebie culture requires a comprehensive approach involving financial transparency, clear policy distinctions, educational initiatives, and a governance focus on sustainable, long-term benefits.

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