UPSCEXAMNOTES.COM

Abode for affordble success

MAINS ANSWERS FOR
TEST-24

15/01/2023

Mains Q& A Test(24)- (15/01/2023)

Approach for the Mains Answer Writing

- **Start Your answer briefly introducing the Topic**
- **Discuss the Key points about the Topic with the Context in the Question**
- **Discuss Pro and Cons of the Topic (if applicable)**
- **Quote the Statistics (if there are any)**
- **Draw the Conclusion (Make Sure your answer doesn't support any particular view and make it look balanced)**

1. Critcally examine the need and rationale behind conducting caste based census in India (150 words)

Introduction
Cast Census

The socio-economic and caste census (SECC) was conducted in 2011 for the first time since 1931.

SECC is meant to canvass every Indian Family, both in rural and urban India, and ask about their economic status to allow central and state authorities to come up with a range of indicators of deprivation, permutations, and combinations that could be used by each authority to define a poor or deprived person.

It is also meant to ask every person their specific caste name to allow the government to re-evaluate which caste groups were economically worse off and which were better off.

SECC has the potential to allow for a mapping of inequalities at a broader level.

Body
Promote Rational Decision Making

A caste census, which will generate exhaustive data will allow policymakers to develop better policies, and implementation strategies, and will also enable a more rational debate on sensitive issues.

Promotes Democratic Policymaking

Advocates of its inclusion believe that the activity will be a pro-poor exercise that will help plan better and more targeted welfare schemes in the country.

A caste census would bring forward a large number of issues that any democratic country needs to pay attention to.

For instance, this census will reveal information regarding caste-based marginalization, deprivation, the kind of jobs pursued by a caste, etc.

So, the caste census is nothing but the collection of data that is necessary for any democratic policymaking.

The rationale for the Reservation Policy

Some proponents also suggest that a Caste Census will also help reservation policymakers have a more accurate idea of the affirmative action needed.

While this data is currently available for SC and ST populations, the OBC population is estimated widely as per the number noted by the Mandal Commission at 52%.

The Justice Rohini Committee was appointed in 2017 to look into the sub-categorization of the OBC communities; however, in the absence of data, there can be no data bank or any proper sub-categorization.

All commissions have had to rely on data from the last caste census (1931). There have been substantive demographic changes since then and therefore, the data has to be updated.

Constitutional Mandate

Indian Constitution also favors conducting a caste census.

Article 340 mandates for appointment of a commission to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes and make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the governments.

Last Cast Census and redundancy

A separate Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) was conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development in rural areas and the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation in urban areas in 2011.

It was the largest exercise of the listing of castes and has the potential of finding inequalities at a broader level.

SECC was a tool to identify beneficiaries of state support and it is open for use by Government departments to grant and/ or restrict benefits to households.

However, the SECC data excluded caste data and was published by the two ministries in 2016.

The raw caste data was handed over to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

The ministry formed an Expert Group under the Former NITI Aayog Vice-Chairperson Arvind Pangaria for the classification and categorization of data.

The Pubic data eventually released gave numbers of different castes in India but not the population-wise data as was the demand.

Only the details of the economic conditions of the people in rural and urban households were released. The caste data has not been released till now.

The Centre says that an analysis of the data showed "that the caste enumeration...was fraught with mistakes and inaccuracies" and "is not reliable".

Way Forward

A Caste census without data integrity would be much worse. Instead of going behind the caste bases census, the government can subclassify the Backward classes like in Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, etc. This will provide the benefit to intended beneficiaries.

Since the government has already appointed Justice G Rohini's panel on the sub-categorization of OBCs. The panel has to fast-pace the sub-classification process.

The Government can use technologies like Artificial Intelligence and machine learning to assess the SECC data and condense them into meaningful categories and some important caste-based information. This will provide the necessary time to analyze the need for a caste census.

2.Discuss some challenges that startups face in India, what are the possible steps to overcome them (150 words)

Introduction
Start-up India is a flagship initiative of the Government of India, intended to build a strong ecosystem that is conducive for the growth of start-up businesses, to drive sustainable economic growth and generate large scale employment opportunities.

Body
Challenges faced by Start up ecosystem in India

Financial resources: Availability of finance is critical for the startups and is always a problem to get sufficient amounts.

Supporting Infrastructure: There are a number of support mechanisms that play a significant role in the lifecycle of startups which include incubators, science and technology parks, business development centers etc. Lack of access to such support mechanisms increases the risk of failure.

Bureaucratic hurdles and corruption: for example earlier Angel tax (now it has been removed) falls under corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies as it takes the focus of entrepreneurs away from building a product or service to responding to tax notices and filing appeals, something that start-ups can clearly do without.

Revenue generation: Several startups fail due to poor revenue generation as the business grows. As the operations increase, expenses grow with reduced revenues forcing startups to concentrate on the funding aspect, thus, diluting the focus on the fundamentals of business.

Initiatives by Government:

There are numerous government initiatives to assist start-ups,

Start Up India initiative: This initiative provides three-year tax and compliance breaks intended for cutting government regulations and red tapism.

MUDRA Yojna: Through this scheme, start-ups get loans from the banks to set up, grow and stabilize their businesses.

SETU (Self-Employment and Talent Utilization) Fund: Government has allotted Rs 1,000 Cr in order to create opportunities for self-employment and new jobs mainly in technology-driven domains.

E-Biz Portal: Government launched e-biz portal, India's first government to business portal that integrates 14 regulatory permissions and licenses at one source to enable faster clearances and improve the ease of doing business in India.

Royalty Tax: Indian government has reduced the royalty tax paid by businesses and start-up firms from 25per cent to 10 per cent

Credit Guarantee Fund Trust: launched by the Government of India (GoI) to make available collateral-free credit to the micro and small enterprise sector. Both the existing and the new enterprises are eligible to be covered under the scheme.

Conclusion

The current economic scenario in India is on expansion mode. The Indian government's liberal policies like Make in India, Digital India, MUDRA etc .shows enthusiasm of centre to increase the GDP rate of growth from grass root levels. With government going full hog on developing entrepreneurs, it could arrest brain drain. It is not out of place to mention that some of these startups would become unicorns and may become world renowned businesses by expanding into other developing and underdeveloped countries.

3.What are different types of plate tectonic boundaries. Discuss various types of landforms associated with a plate boundary (150 words)

Introduction

A tectonic plate (also called lithospheric plate) is a massive, irregularly-shaped slab of solid rock, generally composed of both continental and oceanic lithosphere. Plates move horizontally over the asthenosphere as rigid units. These plates have been constantly moving over the globe throughout the history of the earth. A plate may be referred to as the

continental plate or oceanic plate depending on which of the two occupy a larger portion of the plate.

Body
The different types of plate tectonic boundaries are

Divergent boundary: A divergent boundary occurs when two tectonic plates move away from each other. Along these boundaries, earthquakes are common and magma (molten rock) rises from the Earth's mantle to the surface, solidifying to create a new oceanic crust. For example: Mid-Atlantic Ridge.

Convergent boundary: When two plates come together, it is known as a convergent boundary. The impact of the colliding plates can cause the edges of one or both plates to buckle up into mountain ranges or one of the plates may bend down into a deep seafloor trench. A chain of volcanoes often form parallel to convergent plate boundaries and powerful earthquakes are common along these boundaries. For example: the Washington-Oregon coastline.

Transform plate boundary: Two plates sliding past each other forms a transform plate boundary. Natural or human-made structures that cross a transform boundary are offset—split into pieces and carried in opposite directions. Rocks that line the boundary are pulverized as the plates grind along, creating a linear fault valley or undersea canyon. Earthquakes are common along these faults. In contrast to convergent and divergent boundaries, the crust is cracked and broken at transform margins but is not created or destroyed. For example-San Andreas Fault Zone.

The various types of landforms associated with each type of plate boundary are

Fold Mountains: The compress forces stemming from a convergent plate boundary, where two plates collide with one another, can create fold mountains. Mountains 100 million years old or less, such as the Himalayas, are known as young fold mountains and account for the planet's highest, most impressive ranges. Old fold mountains, which typically formed 250 million years ago or more, mark formerly active plate boundaries and tend to be significantly lower and more eroded; examples include the Appalachians and Urals.

Ocean Trenches: Ocean trenches form at two kinds of convergent plate boundaries: where a continental and oceanic plate converge, or where two oceanic plates converge. The deepest ocean trench is the Mariana Trench.

Ocean Ridges: At divergent boundaries, plates move away from each other, creating a new crust as magma is pushed up from the mantle. Mid-ocean ridges result from volcanic swelling and eruptions along the divergent boundary. The movement of the tectonic plates transports the newly formed crust away from the crest of the ridge in both directions. Mid-Atlantic Ridge serves as a well-known example.

Island Arcs: Subduction process that occurs when an oceanic plate converges with another oceanic plate, that can lead to volcanoes being formed paralleling the trench. A curved chain of these volcanoes, known as an island arc, usually occurs in these cases.

4. Discuss the vulnerability of India to the earthquakes related hazards. Explain the salient features of major disasters caused by earthquakes in different parts of India with examples (150 words)

Introduction
An earthquake is the shaking of the earth caused due to the release of energy which generates waves that travel in all directions.

Earthquake hazards can range across ground shaking, surface rupture, landslide, liquefaction, tectonic deformation, tsunami etc.

Body
The vulnerability of India to the earthquakes

The landmass is penetrating into the Eurasian plate, which makes the country prone to earthquakes of moderate to very high intensity.

Densely populated areas, extensive unscientific constructions and unplanned urbanisation have increased risks.

Regions in Himalayan foothills are vulnerable to liquefaction and landslides due to earthquakes.

Major disasters caused by earthquakes

1993, Latur: Relatively shallow depth caused large surface damage; causes remain debatable due to lack of plate boundaries in the region.

1999, Chamoli: Caused by the thrust fault; resulted in landslides, changes in surface water flow, surface rupture and disconnected valleys.

2001, Bhuj: Associated with a reactivated fault, which was previously unknown; impeccable loss of life and property.

2004, Indian Ocean Tsunami: Created by under-water seismic activity, created massive waves which flooded coastal areas and islands, causing long-term changes.

2005, Kashmir: Caused by severe upthrust of Indian plate against Eurasian plate, it created multiple after-shocks. Infrastructure and communication were disrupted.

Conclusion
India has come a long way on the road to earthquake safety. And yet, much remains to be done before this journey is completed. Creating a system and culture for building safe houses in 21st century India is something not only possible but an absolute necessity.

5.Which state has largest protected area in India? What is the ideal size of protected area. Discuss (150 words)

Introduction
Protected areas are those where human occupation or resource exploitation is restricted. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) provided the widely accepted definition across regional and global frameworks in its categorization guidelines for protected areas. National Parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation / Community Reserves, and Tiger Reserves are all types of protected areas in India.

Body

Himachal Pradesh has the biggest protected forest area with roughly 33,000 square kilometres, followed by Madhya Pradesh with approximately 31,000 square kilometres.

Delegates at the 1992 Fourth World Congress on National Parks & Protected Areas, a decennial international conference that acts as a global platform for defining the agenda for protected areas globally, advised that "protected areas encompass at least 10% of each biome by the year 2000".

Ideal size of protected area

According to the Wildlife Conservation Strategy, 2002, an ESZ might extend up to 10 kilometres surrounding a protected area.

In the case of vulnerable corridors, accessibility, and biologically essential patches critical for landscape connection, regions wider than 10 km can be incorporated into the eco-sensitive area.

Furthermore, even within the framework of a specific Protected Area, the distribution of an ESZ and the level of regulation may not be consistent throughout, and it may be of varied breadth and extent.

6. Explain the US Inflation surge and its impact on Indian Economy?(150 words)

Introduction

Inflation is the rate at which prices increase over a specified time period. In India, inflation is often calculated on a year-on-year basis.

In other words, if the inflation rate for a certain month is 10%, it means that prices in that month were 10% higher than they were a year ago.

In India, inflation is largely assessed by two indices — the WPI (Wholesale Price Index) and the CPI (Consumer Price Index), which reflect changes in wholesale and retail prices, respectively. India's inflation target is a flexible 4 (+/-2) percent.

Body

US Inflation Surge

The Federal Reserve, the US central bank, targets a rate of inflation of no more than 2%. When seen in this light, a 6.2 percent inflation rate represents a rapid increase in prices.

In most cases, an inflation increase can be attributed to either increased demand or decreased supply. Both factors are at play in the United States.

Economic recovery has been considerably more rapid than supply chain recovery, exacerbating the **mismatch between demand and supply**, resulting in a continuous price increase.

Demand Side Inflation: The US economy had a sharp recovery following the rapid launch of the Covid-19 vaccination campaign. A portion of the inflationary surge resulted from this **unusually rapid recovery** in consumer demand overall. This recovery was aided further by the government pumping billions of dollars into the economy to not only provide relief to consumers and jobless workers but also to stimulate demand.

Supply Side Inflation: In 2020, the pandemic resulted in widespread lockdowns and disruptions not just in the United States, but globally. Companies laid off employees and sharply reduced production. In essence, the global supply chain has not resumed pre-pandemic levels of production.

While the **United States has witnessed the sharpest increase in prices**, inflation has startled policymakers in most the world's major economies, including Germany, China, and Japan.

Impact of US Inflation on India

When prices rise globally, imported inflation increases. In other words, everything imported by India and by Indians will become more expensive.

Inflation in advanced economies, particularly the US, will very certainly force the central banks to abandon their loose monetary policies.

In advanced economies, **a tight money policy** would imply higher interest rates. A tight monetary policy entails raising interest rates in order **to curb borrowing and promote savings.**

This will have a significant impact on the Indian economy in two ways:

Indian firms seeking to raise capital outside of India may face increased costs.

The RBI will have to adjust its monetary policy domestically by hiking interest rates. This, in turn, may contribute to further inflation by increasing production costs.

7.What is star rating for packaged good. Discuss the decision to introduce a front-of-pack label of nutrients in packaged food comes in the backdrop of the increasing incidence of non-communicable diseases (150 words)

Introduction
Star rating for packaged good

Food product packaging is often confusing or distracting, particularly when there are so many different options available on supermarket shelves. This can make it hard to understand the nutritional value of products.

The Health Star Rating system is a front of pack labelling system which helps you quickly and easily compare the nutrition of similar products that you typically see in the same part of the shop. The system provides a rating from a half to five stars – the more stars, the healthier the choice. When looking for the stars, remember that they are meant to provide a comparison within similar product categories only. For example, the system helps choose between one breakfast cereal and another, not between yoghurt and pasta sauce.

Body

FoP labelling system has long been listed as one of the global best practices to nudge consumers into healthy food choices.

In India, FoP labelling on packaged foods was recommended in 2014 by an expert committee constituted by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

However, the country has not moved ahead on it towards bringing in a law. In 2019, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) had brought the spotlight on this concern by highlighting the fact that most of such junk foods would be labelled `red' as per the draft FSSAI law.

Packaged foods will have several stars displayed on them which will indicate whether the item is healthy or unhealthy. This 'health start' display on the package will help customers ascertain whether the packaged food is harmful or healthy.

The star rating will be determined by the amount of fats, sugar, and salt in the food item. The system will be similar to the one that is being used by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency for assessing the energy efficiency in electrical devices. The ratings will be placed in front of the packets as studies show that this method is much more effective towards affecting the choice of the consumer.

This move follows a report by the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIM-A) on the impact of front-of-the-pack labelling for packaged and processed foods. The study endorsed the HSR format as the best suited to Indians in helping to choose healthier packaged food items under a new policy on Front of Packaging Labelling (FoPL).

IIM-A has recommended HSR as the most preferred format by Indian consumers under proposed FoPL in India. This national survey by IIM-A is the voice of more than 20,000 people across the country and none of the countries in the world has surveyed people at such a large scale. FoPL will bring a transformational reform in the society as it will encourage healthy eating. It will also help to reduce the burden of Non- Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the country.

Conclusion

The system is not intended to replace general dietary advice, such as that provided by the FSSAI Guidelines, which recommend eating a balanced diet that includes a variety of nutritious foods every day. A high star rating doesn't necessarily mean the product provides for a complete, balanced diet and should replace items from other core food groups or be eaten to excess. In addition, many healthy foods, like fresh fruit and vegetables and lean meats, are not generally packaged and will not display or will have a Health Star Rating. Fresh fruit and vegetables are now eligible to display a 5 star health rating.

8.What is moonlighting policy and discuss about quiet quitting. Explain the reasons for it (150 words)

Introduction
Moon Lighting

Moonlighting is the act of working at an extra job beyond regular working hours, usually without the knowledge of the employer. Since the side job was mostly at night-time or on weekends, it was referred to as moonlighting. The term gained popularity when workers in the US started seeking a second job beyond their regular 9-to-5 work for additional income.

Quite Quitting

Quiet quitting does not refer to employees leaving their jobs, but instead, doing the bare minimum required of them. This could entail leaving work exactly at the end of one's shift, demanding additional pay for extra work, not signing up for ambitious projects, separating one's identity from their job, and/or setting clear work-life boundaries.

While some acknowledge the need to strike a healthy work-life balance through quiet quitting, others consider it to be lazy, disloyal, and potentially indicative of an overall downward spiral.

Body
Reasons for Moonlighting

Many Indian companies typically have lower starting salaries, when compared with foreign companies. Further, the starting salaries of major IT companies in India has been remaining in the same range for the last 10-12 years. Even the inflation factor is not accounted for.

People are compelled to work two jobs in order to support their lifestyles due to the rising cost of necessities as a result of inflation.

The salaries offered by many companies may not be up to the mark to ensure living standards.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, when everyone started working from home, employees got more time on their hands. Further, there was no continuous supervision that usually happens in office jobs.

Many professionals especially in tech companies have had sleepless nights due to the COVID-19 epidemic as several businesses have announced huge layoffs and the process of hiring slows down during the lockdown. Employees were obliged to take up side employment during the lockdown as a result of the worry of losing their jobs.

Reasons for Quite Quitting

Firstly, it has increased the number of hours employees spend working, thus contributing to increased levels of burnout

Secondly, while employees have shown varying levels of productivity for decades, remote work has allowed these employees to slack off unnoticed.

Thirdly, remote work has introduced novel concepts such as Fridays off, digital meetings, and flexible work hours. After experiencing the benefits of such arrangements, workers may be reluctant to go back to the old way of doing things.

Conclusion

The only way to curb this modern industry problem is by strengthening the relationship between employee and employer. The first step should be to break the communication barrier while developing a funnel with no formalities. Companies should also focus on creating policies to recognize and reward employees' performance to boost their confidence with an apt compensation.

9.What is the total Fertility rate (TFR), Discuss the reasons for the declining fertility rate in India. (150 words)

Introduction
Total Fertility rate (TFR)

Total fertility rate (TFR) in simple terms refers to the total number of children born or likely to be born to a woman in her lifetime if she were subject to the prevailing rate of age-specific fertility in the population.

TFR of about 2.1 children per woman is called Replacement-level fertility. TFR lower than 2.1 children per woman -indicates that a generation is not producing enough children to replace itself, eventually leading to an outright reduction in population.

Body

Reasons for the declining fertility rate in India.

Many factors like education (mean school years for females), economy (Gross Domestic Product), religious beliefs, contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR), the strength of family planning programs, etc influence the fertility rates of a country. These factors play an important role in the current decline in the fertility rate in India

Women Empowerment: The latest data also show significant progress on several indicators related to fertility, family planning, age at marriage and women's empowerment — all of which have contributed to the decrease in TFR.

Contraceptives: Also, there has been a significant increase in current use of any modern contraceptive method. Contraceptive Prevalence Rate has increased substantially from 54% to 67% at the all-India level.

Reversible Spacing: Introduction of new reversible spacing (gaps between children) methods, wage compensation systems to undergo sterilisation, and the promotion of small family norms also worked well over the years.

Government Efforts: India has for long been working on population control. In fact, India was the first country to launch a national-level family planning programme and the encouraging results that we see now are due to sustained, concerted efforts put together by the Centre, and the state governments.

Conclusion

The Government must adopt a targeted social and behaviour-change communication strategy to ensure that men also take responsibility for family planning. Provide an affordable social security system that provides pensions to the elderly and takes care of their daily needs and medical expenses. States with higher fertility rates need to keep working on improving schooling, income levels, and reducing infant and neonatal mortality rates.

10.Differentiate the wage depending upon the gender, Discuss Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on it (150 Words)

Introduction

International Labour Organisation's "Global Wage Report 2020-21", suggests the crisis inflicted massive downward pressure on wages & affected women's total wages compared to men. This greater wage reduction for women means that the pre-existing gender pay gap has widened. Despite notable progress in closing the gender pay gap in India, the gap remains high by international standards.

Body

Indian women earned 48% less compared to their male counterparts in 1993-94. Since then, the gap declined to 28% in 2018-19 as in the labour force survey data of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). The pandemic reversed the decade's progress by increasing 7% of the gender pay gap between 2018-19 & 2020-21, by the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS).

Gender-based discriminatory practices include:

- lower wages paid to women
- undervaluation of women's work in highly feminised occupations, enterprises
- motherhood pay gap
- lower wages for mothers compared to non-mothers.

Steps taken in India

India took several steps in the legislative sphere to close the gender pay gap, at the low end of the wage distribution.

India was one of the pioneering countries to enact the minimum Wages Act in 1948 & followed by the adoption of the Equal Remuneration Act in 1976.

In 2019, India carried out comprehensive reforms in both the legislation & enacted the Code on Wages.

Directly, by raising the pay levels of women workers who participated in the programme & indirectly, benefits accrued to women involved in agricultural occupations through higher earnings.

In 2017, the Government amended the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961, which increased the 'Maternity leave with pay protection' from 12 weeks to -26 weeks for all women working in establishments employing 10 or more workers.

This is expected to reduce the motherhood pay gap among mothers in the median & high-end wage earners working in the formal economy.

Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic

Reaffirming the collective commitment to the effective & accelerated realisation of the principle 'Equal pay for work of equal value.'

This becomes all more important in the present context, given the disproportionate effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on women workers in terms of job & income losses.

Full, productive economic growth requires human-centred recovery from the pandemic by improving women's employment outcomes & reducing the gender pay gap.

The impact is uneven with women being among the worst affected in income security, partly due to their representation in sectors hard hit by COVID-19, combined with the gendered division of family responsibilities.

Many women reverted to full-time care of children & the elderly during the pandemic, foregoing their livelihoods.

Conclusion

Equal pay for work of equal value is necessary to close the gender pay gap. Closing the gender pay gap is key to achieving social justice for working women, as well as economic growth for the country.