

7. #SheInspiresUs

Prelims Level: Miscellaneous

Mains Level: GS-I Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies

Context:

- Prime Minister of India on 8th March 2020 marked International Women's Day by handing over control of his social media accounts to seven women achievers. It is claimed to be an unique initiative and it is expected to inspire many women from various echelons of the society who are contributing to its development in their own ways.

International Women's Day 2020:

- International Women's Day (March 8) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women.
- The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity.
- The 2020 theme for International Women's Day (8 March) is, "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights".

History:

- The early years of the 20th century saw rapid industrialisation in many countries and the working conditions of most of the women employed in factories and on the production lines gave cause for considerable concern.
- In 1910 a second International Conference of Working Women was held in Copenhagen. A woman named Clara Zetkin (Leader of the 'Women's Office' for the Social Democratic Party in Germany) tabled the idea of an International Women's Day.
- She proposed that every year in every country there should be a celebration on the same day - a Women's Day - to press for their demands.
- The conference of over 100 women from 17 countries, representing unions, socialist parties, working women's clubs - and including the first three women elected to the Finnish parliament - greeted Zetkin's suggestion with unanimous approval and thus International Women's Day was the result.
- International Women's Day was celebrated for the first time by the United Nations in 1975.
- Then in December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be observed on any day of the year by Member States, in accordance with their historical and national traditions.

- 2011 saw the 100 year centenary of International Women's Day - with the first IWD event held exactly 100 years ago in 1911 in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland.

The Super Seven:

- PM Narendra Modi's social media accounts were handled by seven women from different fields on International Women's Day. A look at the achievements of these women:
- **Arifa Jaan:**
 - ✓ Kashmir-based Arifa Jaan is passionate about reviving Namda, the traditional craft of the region
- **Sneha Mohandoss:**
 - ✓ Inspired by her mother, Chennai-based Sneha Mohandoss started an initiative called Foodbank India, aimed at eradicating hunger through food donation campaigns.
- **Kalavati Devi:**
 - ✓ A mason from Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, she collected funds from the public and built toilets for better hygiene in her locality.
- **Kalpana Ramesh:**
 - ✓ The Hyderabad-based architect is focused on water conservation projects, especially rainwater harvesting, and spreads awareness on the responsible use of water
- **Malvika Iyer:**
 - ✓ An award winning disability rights activist, social worker and model
 - ✓ She lost both arms in a bomb blast at Bikaner when she was 13
- **Vjaya Pawar:**
 - ✓ She promotes handicrafts from the Banjara Community of rural Maharashtra
- **Veena Devi:**
 - ✓ An organic farmer from Munger, Bihar, she has been cultivating mushrooms at some since 2013, setting an example in self-Sufficiency. She gained recognition for cultivating 1 kg mushrooms under her bed
- **Namda Traditional Art:**
 - ✓ Namda is a local term used for traditional felted wool floor coverings, made out of a coarse variety of wool.
 - ✓ Namda comes from the root word Namata (Sanskrit for woollen stuff).
- Namda making is practised as a craft in several cultures, especially in the countries throughout Asia, viz. Iran, Afghanistan and India.

- Srinagar in Kashmir and Tonk in Rajasthan are the two major namda making centres in India.
- In India, it is known to have come from Iran and was actively promoted in the state under the patronage of the Mughal monarchs and the Rajput royals.
- Rich hues and exquisite designing are the characteristics of the handcrafted Namda.
- Unique themes and floral patterns provide the themes for these masterpieces and flowers and leaves, buds and fruits are the essence of the designs.

