

7. Rise in Gender Based Violence

Prelims Syllabus: International Institutions

Prelims Tag: Gender based Violence, UN, UN Women, COVID-19, Women Empowerment.

Mains Syllabus: GS-II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector or Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

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Why in News?

- The UN Women has urged member-states to include prevention of violence against women in their action plans on COVID-19 and it has also called the rise in gender-based violence a “shadow pandemic”.

About UN Women:

- UN Women is the UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. It was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.
- In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.
- It merges and builds on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, which focused exclusively on gender equality and women’s empowerment:
 - ✓ Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW).
 - ✓ International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).
 - ✓ Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI).
 - ✓ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).
- **The main roles of UN Women are:**
 - ✓ To support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.
 - ✓ To help Member States to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society.
- To hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

Suggestions made by UN Women:

- Member states should consider shelters and Helplines Essential Services.

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- Helplines, psychosocial support and online counselling should be boosted, using technology-based solutions such as SMS, online tools and networks to expand social support, and to reach women with no access to phones or Internet.
 - Police and justice services must mobilise to ensure that incidents of violence against women and girls are given high priority with no impunity for perpetrators.

Why these Measures are Necessary?

- Globally 243 million women and girls aged 15-49 have been subjected to sexual and/or physical violence perpetrated by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months.
- The number is likely to increase as security, health and money worries heighten tensions and strains are accentuated by cramped and confined living conditions.

How Lockdown is Worsening the Situation?

- According to emerging data, violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has 'intensified'.
- As per data compiled by the U.N. body, France has seen a 30% increase in domestic violence since the lockdown on March 17.
- In Argentina, emergency calls for domestic violence cases have increased by 25% since the lockdown on March 20 and Cyprus (30%), Singapore (33%) have also registered an increase in calls.
- Canada, Germany, Spain, the U.K. and the U.S. have also registered an increase in cases of domestic violence and demand for emergency shelter.