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Q17

**"Though women in post-Independent India have excelled in various fields, the social attitude towards women and feminist movement has been patriarchal." Apart from women education and women empowerment schemes, what interventions can help change this milieu?**

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · GS II · 15 marks · Health, Education and Human Resources

Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector / Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

**Core demand of the question**

- "Though women in post-Independent India have excelled in various fields, the social attitude towards women and feminist movement has been patriarchal." Apart from women education and women empowerment schemes, what interventions can help change this milieu?
- Honour the official stem. Go beyond education schemes to attitude-changing interventions
- Keep the explanation within a 15-mark length

**Revision summary**

Individual excellence by women has not dissolved patriarchal attitudes toward women or toward the feminist movement.

Beyond education and empowerment schemes, change needs political seats, enforced property rights, and a public care economy.

POSH that works, non-compromise on sexual violence, and an end to sarpanch-pati are attitude interventions.

Male engagement, media norms, and rural-union feminisms stop the smear that equality is only urban.

Milieu is power plus culture; schemes without seats and titles leave patriarchy standing.

**Introduction**

Post-Independence India has produced women Presidents, scientists, judges, pilots and Olympic medallists, yet everyday attitude - in the household, the shrine, the newsroom and the party office - often remains patriarchal. Education and empowerment schemes are necessary; they do not by themselves rewrite the milieu in which a feminist claim is mocked as Western or as a threat to the family.

**Body****What the statement gets right**

- Excellence at the tail - a woman CEO or a woman Air Marshal - coexists with son preference, unpaid care, and violence, because patriarchy is a social structure, not a shortage of role models.

- Parts of the public conversation still treat the feminist movement as man-hatred rather than as a demand for **Articles 14, 15 and 21**, which is itself a patriarchal attitude toward politics.

## Interventions beyond classrooms and scheme portals

- **Political power:** legislate a fair share of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies (the long-pending reservation idea), and enforce the 73rd and 74th Amendment's women's seats against sarpanch-pati practice with penalties, so authority is seen in a woman's name.
- **Property and unpaid work:** full, cheap enforcement of the **Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005**, coparcenary rights, and a care-economy policy - creches, maternity plus paternity leave, and time-use recognition in statistics - so the household bargain shifts.
- **Violence and workplace law:** fast POSH committees that are not employer-captured, time-bound trial of sexual violence, and police-station women-help desks that do not mediate rape as a 'compromise'.
- **Male engagement:** school and panchayat programmes that treat boys as participants in equality, not as the audience of a women-only scheme; religious and caste sabhas that are asked to drop honour-based controls.
- **Media and culture:** public broadcasting and film certification that do not reward humiliation humour; sports and STEM fellowships that keep girls in the pipeline after Class 10, which is attitude work in a stadium, not only in a textbook.
- **Feminist movement itself:** fund rural and union feminisms (SEWA-type, forest rights, ASHA and anganwadi unions) so the movement is not typed as only urban-English, which patriarchy uses as a smear.

## Changing the milieu, not only the metric

- Gender budgeting that publishes incidence of spending, and corporate board diversity with real, not dummy, directors, change what institutions honour.
- Community watch against sex-selective practices and against social boycott of mixed marriages attacks patriarchy where schemes never reach.
- **Recommendation:** a bundle of political reservation, care infrastructure, property enforcement, and male-targeted social norms campaigns - because milieu is power plus culture, and education schemes address only one input.

## Flow diagram

Education and schemes -> Partial change  
 Political reservation property care -> Milieu shift  
 POSH criminal justice -> Milieu shift  
 Male engagement media rural feminism -> Milieu shift  
 Milieu shift -> Attitude less patriarchal

## Conclusion

Women's excellence has not automatically civilised social attitude; patriarchy still frames both the woman achiever and the feminist movement. Apart from education and empowerment schemes, the milieu changes when women hold seats and titles to land, when care is public, when violence is not compromised, and when men and local institutions are made parties to equality. That is constitutional morality in the household, not only in a ministry guideline.

## Facts & figures

### 73rd and 74th Amendments

Women's reservation in panchayats and municipalities; still undermined by proxy male control.

### Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005

Coparcenary rights for daughters; enforcement is the unfinished attitude reform.

### POSH Act, 2013

Workplace sexual-harassment law whose captured committees reproduce patriarchy at the office.

### Women's parliamentary reservation

Long-debated constitutional intervention to normalise women as lawmakers, not as exceptions.

### SEWA-type organising

Working-class feminism that widens the movement beyond an urban stereotype.

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