Gender Mainstreaming

Why in news?

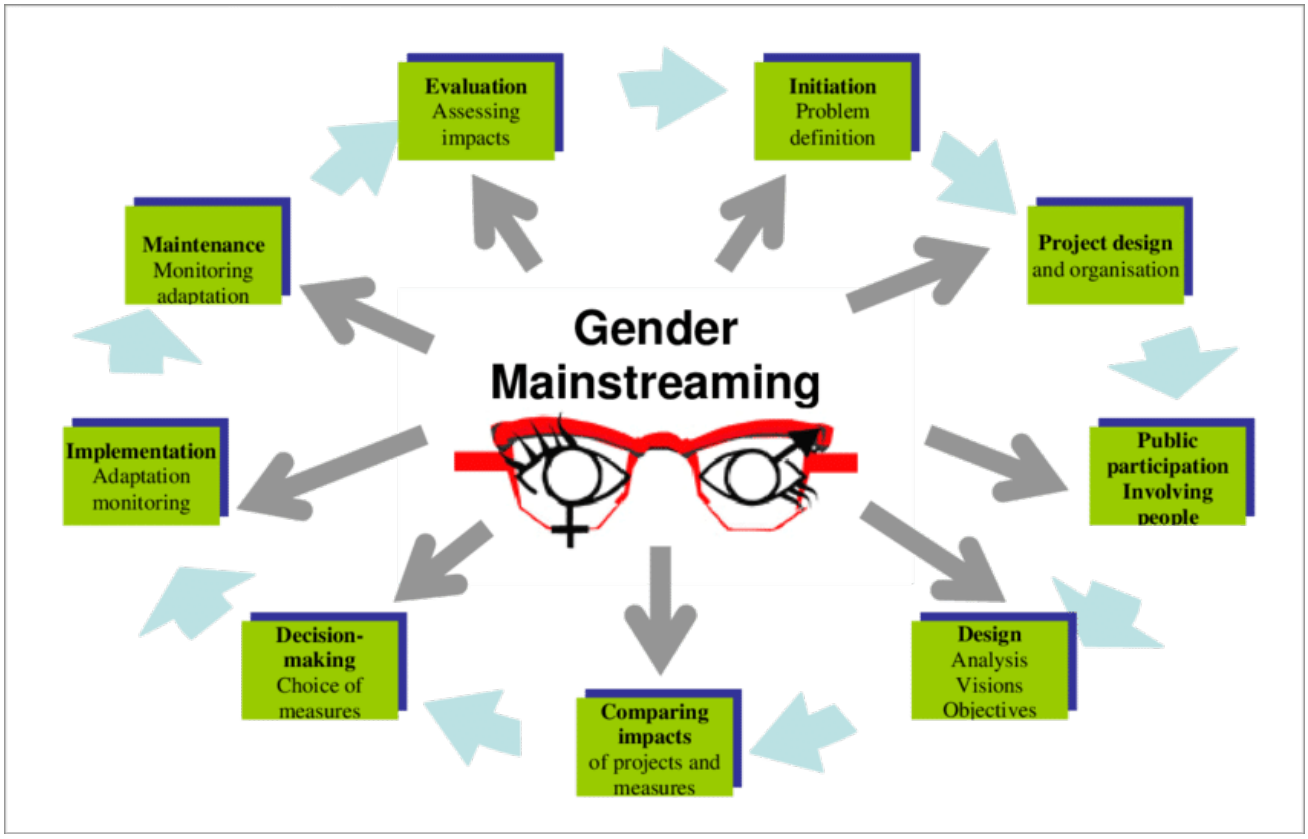
Recently, a two-day National Consultation on Revisiting and Re-envisioning the Beijing Declaration was organized by National Alliance for Women's Organization to review and revive the struggle.

What is gender mainstreaming?

- **Gender mainstreaming –** It means integrating a gender equality perspective when designing, implementing and evaluating policies, programmes and projects.
- **Origin** – The concept of gender mainstreaming was first introduced at the *1985 Nairobi World Conference* on Women.
- **Strategy for gender equality** – Gender mainstreaming was established as a strategy in international gender equality policy through the Beijing Platform for Action.

Beijing Platform for Action was adopted at the 1995 Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing.

- **Key principles of gender mainstreaming**
  - **Inclusive analysis** - Understanding how policies and programs impact women and men differently, and incorporating these insights into decision-making processes.
  - **Equal participation** - Ensuring that both women and men have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from development efforts and policymaking.
  - **Eliminating gender bias** - Identifying and addressing systemic gender biases and inequalities in institutions, practices, and norms.
  - **Empowerment** - Promoting women's empowerment and leadership in all spheres of life, including social, economic, and political domains.
  - **Accountability** - Holding institutions and stakeholders accountable for achieving gender equality goals.



SDG goal 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

How has women rights and gender mainstreaming ev0lved?

- **Seneca Falls Convention** - The ***1848*** Seneca Falls Convention was a historic women's rights meeting in New York where the "*Declaration of Sentiments*" was adopted.
- The declaration held "that all men and women are created equal".
- **Suffrage movement** - The Suffragette movement of the 19th and 20th century was a long-drawn fight by women globally to gain their right to vote.
- **The Second sex (1949)** - French existentialist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir put forth the idea of Gender as a social construct and gender identities are not biologically determined but socially constructed.
- Societal norms and constraints shape women's choices and behaviour, often restricting their freedom and opportunities.
- This perspective laid the theoretical foundation for future feminist activism.
- **The Feminine mystique (1963)** - Betty Friedan brought the private "problem that has no name" till then into the public domain.
- Friedman initiated discussion around devalued domestic work and critiqued the way it was romanticised through the portrayal of housewives as the ideal of femininity.
- **National Organization for Women (NOW)** – It was established in 1966 as a result of collective feminist consciousness on Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) that initiated discussion around domestic work.
- It criticized the portrayal of housewives as the ideal of femininity.
- **Women's strike for equality** - In 1970 over 50,000 women marched with slogans like

"Don't Iron While the Strike is Hot" and "Don't Cook Dinner—Starve a Rat Today".

- The strike was part of the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s and furthered the demand for equality in both public and private spheres.
- **Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1967)** – Appropriate measures to abolish existing laws, customs, regulations and practices which are discriminatory against women,
- **International Women's Year (1975) -** It was organized by United Nations in Mexico City to emphasize importance of women rights.
    - The UN further designated the decade from 1976-1985 as the United Nations Decade for Women.
- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against (CEDAW) –** It was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women.
- It was ratified in second world conference.
- **Discrimination** - It redefined that 'discrimination' is not only legal inequalities but also social and cultural barriers, and compelled nations to take steps to dismantle systemic inequalities.

United Nations World Conference on Women	Significances
First world conference on women (1975) – Mexico City	• Unified global framework on women's rights. • Plan of action for the implementation of the objectives of the International Women's Year.
Second world conference on women (1980) - Copenhagen	• Focus on employment, health and education. • To review progress in implementing the goals of the first world conference.
Third world conference on women (1985) - Nairobi	• Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies. • Measures for achieving gender equality at the national level. • Promote women's participation in peace and development efforts. • Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against (CEDAW)
Fourth world conference on women (1995) - Beijing	• The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. • Recognized women's rights as human rights. • Formulated key global policy framework on gender equality. • Emphasized shared societal responsibility. • Recognized 12 areas of concern in achieving women equality.



What are the challenges in achieving women's rights?

- **Lack of women in leadership –** It hinders comprehensive policy formulation on women development.
  - 27% of parliamentary seats
  - 36% of local government seats
  - 28% of management positions
- **Lack of equal grounds** – The conferences failed to address intersectional inequalities faced by women of color, indigenous women, and those from economically disadvantaged or conflict-affected.
- **Non-binding nature –** Governments endorsed gender equality but failed to implement laws or policies that would lead to substantial changes for women on the ground.
  - The absence of binding nature diluted the effectiveness of the conference outcomes.
- **Absence of accountability –** The effectiveness of these international conferences was often undermined by a lack of sustained political will and accountability.
- **Imbalance in unpaid care work** – Persistent gender inequality in house hold chores limits women's participation in education, employment, and other opportunities.
- By 2050, women globally will be spending 9.5 per cent more time (2.3 more hours per day) on unpaid care work than men.
- **Legal barriers** – At least 28 countries do not have laws granting women equal rights to enter marriage and initiate divorce.
- **Inadequate funding** - Women's rights cannot be fully realized without addressing the financial constraints.
- The additional investment needed for achieving gender equality by 2030 is estimated at USD 360 billion per year.
- **Social norms and cultural practices** – The prevalence of child marriage highlights the need for attitudinal shifts and the promotion of legal frameworks that safeguard women and girls' rights.

    - Globally, one in five young women is married before age 18.
- **Women and armed conflict** – Wars and armed conflict destroy families and societies and leave women and girls particularly vulnerable.
    - Sexual violence is widespread and often used as a war tactic which affects women right.

What lies ahead?

- Focus on Education and awareness
- Promote women's participation in the workforce by providing equal pay and career development opportunities.
- Data collection to identify areas of inequality and monitor progress.
- Promote gender equality in the workplace, improve working conditions

Reference

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