

Q) Critically examine the impact of COVID-19 on rural India.

Ans
The global pandemic - COVID-19 has disrupted every sphere of life and every section of society. It has impacted both rural & urban India. But rural sector being already stressed i.e. poor sanitation, poor health infrastructure etc. have been impacted relatively more than urban areas.

Impact of COVID on Rural India

→ Social Impact

(i) On women:

- Increased burden of home care of old people, childrens etc.
- Increased incidents of domestic violence, harassment,
- Relatively women has lost more jobs than men.
- Increased instances of child marriage in rural areas.

(ii) On health indicators:

- Due to poor sanitation facilities in rural areas, and lack of water availability for hand wash, there are relatively more chances of contamination due to corona virus.
- vaccine hesitancy
- Lack of awareness due to high illiteracy rate.

(iii) Education:

- Due to lack of ICT devices & connectivity, education &

learning outcomes are hampered relatively more in rural India.

→ Economic Impact

- (i) Reverse migration
from urban areas have put burden on the rural resources & jobs.
- (ii) Loss of livelihood opportunities
higher share in unorganised sector, daily wage earners, due to restriction on movement for jobs etc.
- (iii) Farming
 - loss to farmers due to lesser access to markets due to reduced mobility, decreased demand etc.
 - collapse of prices of agri-commodities, poultry products etc.
- (iv) Increased health expenses
- (v) Death of sole bread earners.

Way forward

- To break the vicious cycle of poverty in rural India, there is a need of expansion of MGNREGA beneficiaries, SHGs for women, entrepreneurship opportunities through easy credit facilities.
- Decentralised Governance through PRI, so that needs of rural India can be catered.
- National Employment Policy should focus on reverse migration, rural women so that new India vision can be attained.