

**NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION,
EMPOWERMENT ETC****Triple Talaq**

The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2019, better known as the Triple Talaq Bill, was passed in the Rajya Sabha, which was earlier passed by Lok Sabha.

Background:

- In the Shah Bano case in 1985, the SC granted Shah Bano, a 62-year old woman the right to alimony from her husband.
- But in 1986, the government passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act which diluted the positive impact created by the Shah Bano case.
- In 2001, in the Danial Latifi & Anr versus Union of India case, the SC upheld the validity of the Shah Bano judgement.
- In August 2017, a five-judge bench of the SC declared the triple talaq as unconstitutional in a majority 3:2 judgement. This was the culmination of a petition filed by Shayara Bano, whose husband of 15 years had divorced her through a letter where he pronounced talaq three times, to declare the divorce as void.

Triple Talaq bill

- During the proceedings of the case, the centre had told the bench that it will come out with a legislation to regulate the marriage and divorce among Muslims.
- The bill will make instant triple talaq a cognizable and non-bailable offence
- The bill seeks to impose a prison term of up to three years and fine for any Muslim man who divorces his wife through instant triple talaq
- It also makes a provision for alimony i.e. subsistence allowance for the Muslim women and also grants her the custody of minor children

What does the supporters of triple talaq say?

- All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), a non-governmental body that supervises the application of Muslim personal law, in an affidavit before the court had maintained that courts could not decide matters of religious practices and it is for legislature to frame a law. AIMPLB is also of the opinion that the issue has been blown out of proportion by the media and the far rightist groups.
- Many community leaders also see this as interference in what they call as religious rights of Muslims as India has a provision for personal laws for all religious communities. They have also claimed that practice will continue as before, irrespective of the legal opinion.

Empowering Muslim Women

- Supreme Court: In August 2017 the Supreme Court in a landmark verdict had held that the practice of triple talaq violates the constitutional rights of Muslim women. The triple talaq must come under ambit of Article-13. The personal law can no longer privilege over fundamental rights. Further SC directed central govt to enact a law which make triple talaq an offence.
- Giving rights to women: The triple talaq bill passed by parliament will protect women who suffer from instant talaq. Talaq will not be unilaterally, the women can also put their ground. The judgment will be given in accordance with law and none of partner will suffer. The other laws for women are Anti dowry Act 1961 and The Domestic Violence Act 2005

Arguments against triple talaq

- It goes against the rights of equality and women's empowerment. It propagates the dominance of men over women.
- According to a study, 92% of Muslim women in India wanted the triple talaq to be banned.
- It gave men the right to arbitrarily divorce their wives without any valid reason.
- New-age technology has given birth to new modes of triple talaq such as through skype, text messages and email.

- Many Islamic countries have outlawed this practice including Bangladesh, Pakistan and Indonesia. There is no reason for a democratic and secular India to continue this lopsided practice.
- It goes against the constitutional principles of gender equality, secularism, right to life of dignity, etc. It goes against Article 14 (Right to Equality) and Article 15(1) which states that there shall be no discrimination against any citizen on the basis of gender, race, etc. and this kind of talaq is biased against the interests of women.
- The constitution of the country says that it shall strive to bring a uniform civil code for the entire country. Doing away with triple talaq will definitely be a step closer to the constitution-makers' dream of having a uniform civil code for all citizens.
- However, the National Commission of Women says that this matter cannot be linked to uniform civil code. Nevertheless, it should be banned in order to protect the interests of Muslim women.
- The Supreme Court has also declared that this practice is unconstitutional and not protected by Article 25 which regards the freedom of religion. Also in December 2016, the Allahabad High Court had said that no personal law board was above the constitution.
- Experts also opine that only the essential or integral features and aspects of a religion are protected by the Constitution. Triple talaq was not an integral feature of Islam.

Challenges in banning triple talaq:

- Religious groups infer the banning of a traditional practice sanctified by Sharia as interfering in the religious aspects of minorities.
- The courts should decide two things basically:
 - Whether personal law can be subject to the constitution or not
 - How to view the relationship between triple talaq and Muslim personal law

Key Features

- The Bill makes declaration of talaq a cognizable offence, attracting up to three years' imprisonment with a fine. (A cognizable offence is one for which a police officer may arrest an accused person without warrant.)
- The offence will be cognizable only if information relating to the offence is given by:
 - the married woman (against whom talaq has been declared), or
 - any person related to her by blood or marriage.
- The Bill provides that the Magistrate may grant bail to the accused.
- The bail may be granted only after hearing the woman (against whom talaq has been pronounced), and if the Magistrate is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for granting bail.
- The offence may be compounded by the Magistrate upon the request of the woman (against whom talaq has been declared). Compounding refers to the procedure where the two sides agree to stop legal proceedings, and settle the dispute.
- The terms and conditions of the compounding of the offence will be determined by the Magistrate.
- A Muslim woman against whom talaq has been declared is entitled to seek subsistence allowance from her husband for herself and for her dependent children. The amount of the allowance will be determined by the Magistrate.
- A Muslim woman against whom such talaq has been declared, is entitled to seek custody of her minor children. The manner of custody will be determined by the Magistrate.

Conclusion: Triple talaq has been one of the most debated issues in past couple of years in India as it is also connected with other issues such as secularism and uniform civil code etc. However it is important to keep in mind that what is at stake here is the dignity of women and their rights and any move to politicise the issue will undo the efforts and fight of Muslim women for equal rights.

Central Waqf Council(CWC)

Union Minority Affairs Minister has inaugurated a national conference of Central Wakf Council(CWC) in New Delhi. The Central Government has set a target to achieve 100% digitisation

of Waqf properties across the country in its first 100 days. There are more than 6 lakh registered Waqf properties across the country. The minister also awarded 8 Mutawalis under “Qaumi Waqf Board Taraqati Scheme” for better management of Waqf properties in their respective state Waqf boards. Mutawalli are Custodian of the Waqf properties. The minister has also said that the report of a five-member committee, constituted to review Waqf properties lease rule headed by Justice (Retd) Zakiullah Khan has been submitted.

Central Wakf Council

- Central Wakf Council is a statutory body established in 1964 by the Government of India under Wakf Act, 1954. The council advises the government on matters pertaining to working of the State Wakf Boards and proper administration of the Wakfs in the country.
- Wakf is a permanent dedication of movable or immovable properties for religious, pious or charitable purposes as recognized by Muslim Law, given by philanthropists.

GEOGRAPHY

TOI 270 – NASA finds a new planetary system about 73 light years away from earth

- NASA’s Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) has recently discovered a new planetary system. It has been named as TOI 270.
- TOI 270 is about 73 light years away from Earth, and is located in the constellation Pictor.
- The members of the planetary system include a dwarf star (TOI 270), which is 40% smaller than the Sun in size and mass, and the three planets or exoplanets (planets outside the solar system).
- The exoplanets have been named TOI 270 b, TOI 270 c, and TOI 270 d. TOI 270 b is the innermost planet.
- TOI 270 c and TOI 270 d are Neptune-like planets because their compositions are dominated by gases rather than rock.
- The three planets orbit the star every 3.4 days, 5.7 days, and 11.4 days respectively.
- Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) is an all-sky survey mission that seeks to discover exoplanets around nearby bright stars. It was launched in April 2018, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY

First CAG report on GST

Some of the findings of the report are:

- Government had failed to try out the system before its rollout, leading to inadequate compliance mechanisms, and lower tax revenues
- Even after two years of rollout of GST, system validated Input Tax Credit through ‘invoice matching’ is not in place.
- The complexity of the return mechanism and the technical glitches resulted in rollback of invoice-matching, rendering the system prone to Input Tax Credit frauds
- Without invoice matching and auto generation of refunds, assessments, etc, the envisaged GST tax compliance system is non-functional (resulting in falling number of returns filed month after month)
- The government had not been following the rules set out regarding the transfer of revenue to the States.
- There has been lack of coordination between the Department of Revenue, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs and the GST Network

Do you know

- The new indirect tax regime – GST – had kicked in July 2017.
- The transformation tax structure is aimed at reducing tax cascading, ushering in a common market for goods and services and bringing in a simplified, self-regulating and non-intrusive tax compliance regime.
- CAG is a Constitutional body constituted under Article 148 appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.

GOVERNANCE**National Conference on e-Governance**

Meghalaya will host the 22nd National Conference on e-Governance 2019. The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG), in association with Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India will organize the 22nd National Conference on e-Governance 2019 on 8-9th August, 2019 at Shillong, Meghalaya. Theme of the conference is “Digital India: Success to Excellence”.

Key discussions of the conference are to be held around five sub themes:

- India Enterprise Architecture (INDEA)
- Digital Infrastructure
- One Nation – One Platform
- Secretariat Reforms
- National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA)

This is the first time that National Conference on e-Governance is being organized in North-Eastern region of the country. The conference provides a platform to disseminate knowledge on effective methods of designing and implementing sustainable e-Governance initiatives to provide end-to-end:

- Digital Services
- Exchange experiences in solving problems
- Mitigating risks
- Resolving issues and planning for success.

INDIAN ECONOMY**ECB Norms for Corporates, NBFCs Relaxed**

With a view to further liberalise the External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) framework, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently decided to relax the end-use restrictions relating to external commercial borrowings for Working Capital requirements, General Corporate purposes and Repayment of rupee loans.

Importance of the move:

- It is a move aimed at providing access to cheaper and longer term funds for the corporate sector, especially liquidity-starved Non Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs).
- RBI has allowed eligible borrowers to raise ECBs with a maturity period of 10 years from recognised lenders, except foreign branches and overseas subsidiaries of Indian banks.
- ECBs with a minimum average maturity period of 10 years will be allowed for working capital purposes and general corporate purposes.
- Borrowing for on-lending (When an organization lends money that they have borrowed from another organization or person) by non-banking financial companies for the 10 year maturity and end-use of funds is also permitted.
- For repayment of rupee loans availed domestically for purposes other than capital expenditure and for on-lending by NBFCs for the same, the minimum average maturity period of the ECB would have to be 10 years.
- RBI also allowed ECBs with a minimum average maturity period of 7 years for repayment of rupee loans availed domestically for capital expenditure.
- The borrowings for on-lending by NBFCs for the repayment of rupee loans would also be permitted.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE
ETC****Hyperloop**

- The Mumbai-Pune Hyperloop project received a push with the Maharashtra Cabinet approving to appoint a consortium of DP World and Hyperloop Technologies as its Original Project Proponent (OPP).

- With Hyperloop travel the 150-km journey between Mumbai and Pune will be cut down to just 23 minutes, turning the region into one megacity.
- Project is given a ‘public infrastructure’ status, which will enable it an easier access to funds and concessions.
- The project will improve connectivity for the 2.6 crore residents of both cities, and expect 15 crore people to use the service annually.
- If all goes well India could be the first country in the world to officially commission a hyperloop.
- The project is being carried out by the Pune Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (PMRDA) and is said to have a total investment of Rs 70,000 crore.
- Hyperloop is a high-speed mode of transportation, where a pod-like vehicle travels through a sealed tube at near the speed of an airline.

Electric Buses

- Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant announced that an inter-ministerial panel has sanctioned 5,645 electric buses for operations in 65 cities and for intercity operations to 8 state transport undertakings.
- This will give huge impetus to automobile sector, clean up our cities & drive Make in India.
- Some of the measures taken to popularise environment-friendly electric vehicles are:
- GST Council headed by Finance Minister decided to cut the tax rates on e-vehicles from 12 per cent to 5 per cent with effect from August 1, 2019
- In the Union Budget 2019-20, the government proposed additional income tax deduction of Rs 1.5 lakh on the interest paid on loans taken to purchase electric vehicles
- Certain parts of EVs have been exempted from customs duty
- The Centre has also approved Rs 10,000 crore under the FAME II scheme, which aims to encourage faster adoption of such vehicles by right incentives and charging infrastructure

In a first, Maharashtra gets biometric database to list criminals

- Maharashtra has become the first state in the country to adopt automated multimodal biometric identification system(AMBIS).
- AMBIS unit comprises a computer terminal,a camera and iris,fingerprint, and palm scanners.It also includes a portable system to dust off and capture fingerprints from crime scenes.
- AMBIS system collates data and enables automated identification of criminal records using fingerprint, face and iris recognition.The system was developed in France and adapted to meet the state’s requirements with the help of Indian Institute of Technology professors,
- AMBIS helps investigators trace suspects and ascertain whether a suspect has a criminal record.The system has a capacity to store the data of 20 lakh criminals.It can go through its archives and give results in 0.45 milliseconds.
- Additionally,data from AMBIS can be shared with the National Crime Records Bureau(NCRB) and investigation agencies from other states and courts, including foreign agencies like Interpol.

ODISHA DEVELOPMENT

Odisha Model of Empowering Women

Other States could take a cue from Odisha, which has empowered women politically and financially

Concerns

- The number of women taking leadership roles in India is rather small compared to the global average.
- The representation of women MPs in the 17th Lok Sabha has seen an improvement from 11% in 2014 to 14% in 2019, but it is still lower than the world average of 24.3%.
- In 2019, 715 women candidates contested the Lok Sabha election, while the number of men who contested stood at 7,334.

Achievements of Odisha model by empowering women:Political:

- State government was among the first to reserve 50% of seats in Panchayati Raj institutions for women.
- Further, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik nominated women for one-third of the seats in Lok Sabha election.
- Thus, seven candidates out of 21 fielded by the party for the 2019 election were women.
- The success rate among the women candidates was higher than for men, as five out of seven won the elections.

Economical

- As of now, Odisha has six lakh self-help groups with seven million women under its flagship 'Mission Shakti' programme.
- The programme aims at empowering women by helping them start income-generating activities.
- The self-help groups are linked to the Odisha Livelihoods Mission and Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society.
- Members of the self-help groups are encouraged to sell products at fairs and exhibitions organised by the State round the year.
- This gives them an opportunity to travel across different parts of the State and gain greater exposure.
- The State government had announced an interest-free loan of Rs. 3 lakh in January 2019 to each of the self-help groups.
- This amount was increased to Rs. 5 lakh just before the general election.
- The Women and Child Development Department has been rechristened as the Women and Child Development and Mission Shakti Department.
- The state government has announced several sops like Smartphone, award of work contracts, and higher entitlements in the State's health insurance scheme, arguably superior to the national level scheme, Ayushman Bharat.
- The State government has announced an accident insurance scheme for all members of self-help groups

Conclusion: In the process of empowerment women should consider their Strengths and Weakness Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) and move forward to unfold their own potential to achieve their goals through self-development. In our country empowering women through enterprise development has become an integral part of our development efforts due to three important advantage entrepreneurs, economic growth and social stability .

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: Briefly Discuss the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2019. Why it opposed and what are the challenges lie for its implementation?

Ans:

Triple Talaq is a form of Islamic divorce which has been used by Muslims in India, especially adherents of Hanafi Sunni Islamic schools of jurisprudence. It allows any Muslim man to legally divorce his wife by stating the word talaq (the Arabic word for "divorce") three times in oral, written, or more recently, electronic form. The Triple Talaq Bill, which was recently passed by Rajyasabha, intends to criminalize the age-old practice of Triple Talaq. In the Shah Bano case in 1985, the SC granted Shah Bano, a 62-year old woman the right to alimony from her husband. But in 1986, the government passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act which diluted the positive impact created by the Shah Bano case. In 2001, in the Danial Latifi & Anr versus Union of India case, the SC upheld the validity of the Shah Bano judgement. In August 2017, a five-judge bench of the SC declared the triple talaq as unconstitutional in a majority 3:2 judgement. This was the culmination of a petition filed by Shayara Bano, whose husband of 15 years had divorced her through a letter where he pronounced talaq three times, to declare the divorce as void.

Opposition to the bill

It is well established that criminalising something does not have any deterrent effect on its practice.

- Since marriage is a civil contract, the procedures to be followed on its breakdown should also be of civil nature only.
- Civil redress mechanisms must ensure that Muslim women are able to negotiate for their rights both within and outside of the marriage
- The harsh punishment defies the doctrine of proportionality.
- Three years in prison of the convicted husband will end up penalising the already aggrieved wife and children too.
- The punishment will aggravate the insecurity and alienation of the Indian Muslim community
- In the recent Supreme Court judgement, it never said that triple talaq is to be criminally punished.
- Invoke a secular law that already exists: Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005.
- Parliament should have passed a law stating that the utterance of the words “talaq, talaq, talaq” would amount to “domestic violence” as defined in the PWDVA.
- The PWDVA was conceived as a law that ensures speedy relief — ideally within three months — to an aggrieved woman
- While PWDVA is civil in nature, it has a reasonably stringent penal provision built into it

Challenges in banning triple talaq:

- Religious groups infer the banning of a traditional practice sanctified by Sharia as interfering in the religious aspects of minorities.
- The courts should decide two things basically:
 - Whether personal law can be subject to the constitution or not
 - How to view the relationship between triple talaq and Muslim personal law

Conclusion: Triple Talaq is often known for its controversy through the world and it is noted that the custom is banned in the Muslim-majority countries of Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Afghanistan and Pakistan. There are many instances where Muslim clerics flout the Supreme Court ban on triple talaq by using the term “talaq-e-bain” to divorce the wife unilaterally. So, in such cases, Triple Talaq in some form or other name will continue to happen even after this bill because such laws by their nature are difficult to enforce. Any form of divorce will continue to exist with some other name till the Muslim clergy does not change in its nature.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS BASED MCQS

1. With reference to the 'Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS)', which of the following statements is/are NOT correct?
 1. TESS is European Space Agency (ESA) mission, an all-sky survey for transiting exoplanets.
 2. It was launched in 2018 aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket out of Cape Canaveral.
 3. Recently, it has discovered a new planetary system called TESS Object of Interest (TOI) 270.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) **1 only**
 (b) 2 only
 (c) 1 and 3 only
 (d) 2 and 3 only
2. With reference to the 'Automated Multimodal Biometric Identification System' (AMBIS), consider the following statements:
 1. It is an advanced crime detection system.
 2. It comprises a computer terminal, a camera, and iris, fingerprint, and palm scanners.
 3. While AMBIS provides only one-to-one fingerprint matches, multimodal matches is possible with Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) **1 and 2**
 (c) 2 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3
3. Consider the following statements:
 1. Recently, the RBI has permitted External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) for on-lending by Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) for the repayment of rupee loans.
 2. NBFC include any institution whose principal business is that of agriculture activity, industrial activity, purchase or sale of any goods or providing any services.
 3. NBFCs lend and make investments, accept demand deposits and hence their activities are akin to that of banks.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) **1 only**
 (b) 1 and 2 only
 (c) 2 and 3 only
 (d) 1, 2 and 3
4. The 22nd national conference on e-governance is going to held in which of the following north-eastern state?
 - (a) Assam
 - (b) **Meghalaya**
 - (c) Mizoram
 - (d) Nagaland
5. Consider the following statements w.r.t Triple Talaq Bill.
 1. The bill will make instant triple talaq a cognizable and non-bailable offence
 2. The Bill provides that the Magistrate may grant bail to the accused.

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
 (b) 2 only
 (c) **Both 1 and 2**
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the Central Wakf Council?
 1. It is a statutory body.
 2. It advises the government on matters pertaining to working of the State Wakf Boards

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
 (b) 2 only
 (c) **Both 1 and 2**
 (d) Neither 1 nor 2