

GOVERNANCE

Divorced Muslim Women's Right to Maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC

Why in News?

- The Supreme Court has decided to examine if a divorced Muslim woman is entitled to a claim of maintenance under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) against her former husband.

Background

- A Muslim man had challenged a Telangana High Court direction to pay Rs.10,000 interim maintenance to his former wife.
- He contended that maintenance in this case will instead be governed by the provisions of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986.
- He told the Supreme Court that the Telangana HC had failed to appreciate that the provisions of the 1986 Act, which is a Special Act will prevail over the Provisions of section 125 CrPC which is the general Act.
- The Supreme Court while hearing the petition by the Muslim man observed that the 1986 Act does not say that a divorced Muslim woman cannot file a petition under Section 125 of the CrPC, 1973.
- The Court has reserved decision on the question as to which of these two laws would prevail.

About Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986

- The 1986 Act is a religion-specific law that provides for a procedure for a Muslim woman to claim maintenance during divorce.
- It was enacted to essentially nullify the Supreme Court's 1985 decision in the case of Mohd. Ahmad Khan v. Shah Bano Begum which upheld a Muslim woman's right to seek maintenance from her divorced husband under Section 125 of the CrPC.
 - The verdict was, however, perceived by many to be an affront to religious personal laws.
- Section 3 of the 1986 Act guarantees the payment of maintenance to a divorced Muslim woman by her former husband only during the period of iddat.
 - Iddat is a period, usually of three months, which a woman must observe after the death of her husband or a divorce before she can remarry.
- Such an amount shall be equal to the amount of mahr or dowry given to her at the time of her marriage or any time after that.
- After the completion of the iddat period, a woman can approach a first-class magistrate for maintenance in case she has not remarried and is not in a position to take care of herself financially.

What is Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)?

- Section 125 of CrPC lays down a Secular law for the maintenance of Wife, Child or Parents.
- It is a legal provision that allows certain categories of individuals to claim financial support from their spouses or children, as the case may be, in the event they are unable to maintain themselves.
- This section helps giving monetary assistance to the vulnerable avoiding situations like Vagrancy and Poverty.

Prior Judicial Precedents

- The Allahabad High Court, in multiple judgments, has reaffirmed a divorced Muslim woman's right to claim maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC even after the completion of the iddat period as long as she does not marry.
- In *MujeebRahiman v. Thasleena* (2022):
 - A single judge of the Kerala High Court observed that a divorced Muslim woman can seek maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC until she obtains relief under Section 3 of the 1986 Act.
 - Such an order will remain in force until the amount payable under Section 3 is paid.
- *Noushad Flourish v. AkhilaNoushad* (2023):
 - A Muslim wife who effected her divorce by the pronouncement of khula (divorce at the instance of, and with the consent of the wife) cannot claim maintenance from her husband under Section 125 of the CrPC.

ECONOMY

Crops in Centre's MSP Proposal for Farmers

Why in the News?

- During the fourth round of talks with protesting farmers, the Central government presented a proposal for crop diversification in Punjab.
- Under the proposal, government promoted cooperatives would offer five-year contracts to procure five crops — tur (arhar), urad dal, masur (lentil), maize, and cotton — at Minimum Support Prices (MSP).

About Minimum Support Price (MSP)

- In 1966-67, as a part of extensive agricultural reforms, MSP was introduced for the first time by the Central Government.
- Minimum support price (MSP) is a "minimum price" for any crop that the Government considers as remunerative for farmers and hence deserving of "support".
- It is also the price that Government agencies pay whenever they procure the particular crop from the farmers.

- It is a way of protecting the farmers in India from the uncertainties of the markets as well as those of the natural kind.
- There is currently no statutory backing for these prices, nor any law mandating their enforcement.

Crops Covered Under MSP

- At present, the Central Government sets MSP for 23 crops.
- These include:
 - 7 cereals (bajra, wheat, maize, paddy barley, ragi and jowar);
 - 5 pulses (tur, chana, masur, urad and moong);
 - 7 oilseeds (safflower, mustard, niger seed, soyabean, groundnut, sesame and sunflower);
 - 4 commercial crops (raw jute, cotton, copra and sugarcane).

How Does the Government Decide on the MSP?

- The Government announces the MSP at the start of each cropping season (Rabi and Kharif).
- The MSP is decided after the Government exhaustively studies the recommendations made by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).
 - CACP is an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- These recommendations are based on a pre-fixed formulae. This includes the actual cost incurred, implicit family labour as well as the sort of fixed assets or rent paid by the farmers.

How Can the Government Provide Legal Guarantee for MSP?

- Primarily, there are two ways that the government can provide legal guarantee for MSP. Both have severe economic repercussions:
 - First, the Government can declare MSP as the baseline price for the 23 crops in the market. It'll be a mandate for private players to pay MSP rates, which may lead to price rise.
 - Secondly, the Government itself can buy all 23 crops at MSP.

Consequences of According Legal Stature to MSP

- A policy paper by NITI Aayog's agricultural economist Ramesh Chand argues that price level that is not supported by demand and supply cannot be sustained through legal means.
- The paper noted that segments like horticulture, milk and fishery (where market intervention is nil or very little) showed 4-10% annual growth whereas the growth rate in cereals, where MSP and other interventions are quite high, remained at 1.1% after 2011-12.
- Higher procurement cost would mean increase in prices of food grains, leading to inflation, which would eventually affect the poor.
- There also lies practical difficulties in getting the private sector on board for buying at legally guaranteed MSP.
- The paper cited the example of sugarcane – where the support price (Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)) is the statutory minimum price – and pointed out the accumulation of crores in arrears as private sugar mills could not find FRP for sugarcane matching with sugar prices.

Suggestions

- Provide Direct Income Support:
 - MSP is a short-term solution. It is not a sustainable solution for all of Indian agriculture.
 - Instead of arbitrarily fixing prices of goods in the market, the more effective way might be to provide direct income support to those who are poor — regardless of whether they are farmers or not.
- Investment Boost to Infrastructure:
 - Better irrigation facilities, easier access to credit, timely access to power, creating lots of warehouses, and ramping up of extension services including post-harvest marketing.
 - It is when such facilities are provided — either free or at an accessible price point — that the Indian farmer would become less vulnerable.
- Eliminate Disguised Unemployment in Agriculture sector:
 - The solution to the economic distress of Indian farmers lies outside agriculture. It lies in boosting India's industrial and services sectors.
 - These are the two sectors that can absorb the excess labour that is engaged at present in extremely unremunerative farm activities and provide them with well-paying jobs.
 - It is only when industries and services sectors grow rapidly for the next couple of decades that India's farm distress will get alleviated.

News Summary

- The fourth meeting between Union Ministers and farmer representatives to deliberate on their demands, including a legal guarantee for minimum support price on crops, remained inconclusive.
- However, the meeting moved in a 'positive' direction as the government proposed to give a guarantee on procuring of five crops on Minimum Support Price (MSP).
- A proposal was discussed in which the government agencies like NCCF and NAFED will get into a contract and buy produce pulses - arhar, tur and urad, and corn from the farmers on MSP.
 - There will be no limit on the quantity.

- Similarly, the government proposed that the Cotton Corporation of India will enter 5-year agreement with farmers to buy cotton crops at MSP.
- However, the protesting farmers have rejected the above mentioned proposals & demanded a legally guaranteed MSP for all crops across the country.

PRELIM FACTS**1. Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme**

- A one-day awareness programme on the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme was recently held in Srinagar.

About Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme:

- Launched on June 29, 2020, PMFMPE is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.
- It is designed to address the challenges faced by micro-enterprises and to tap the potential of groups and cooperatives to support the upgradation and formalization of these enterprises.
- Objectives: To build the capability of microenterprises to enable:
 - Increased access to credit by existing micro food processing entrepreneurs, FPOs, self-help groups, and co-operatives.
 - Integration with an organized supply chain by strengthening branding & marketing.
 - Support for the transition of existing 2, 00,000 enterprises into a formal framework.
 - Increased access to common services like common processing facilities, laboratories, storage, packaging, marketing, and incubation services.
 - Strengthening of institutions, research, and training in the food processing sector; and
 - Increased access for enterprises, to professional and technical support.
- Outlay:
 - The scheme envisages an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crores over a period of five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25.
 - The expenditure under the scheme would be shared in a 60:40 ratio between Central and State Governments, in a 90:10 ratio with the Northeastern and the Himalayan States, a 60:40 ratio with UTs with the legislature and 100% by the Center for other UTs.
- Coverage:
 - Under the scheme, 2, 00, 000 micro food processing units will be directly assisted with credit-linked subsidies.
 - Adequate, supportive common infrastructure and institutional architecture will be supported to accelerate the growth of the sector.
- Benefits: The program has four broad components addressing the needs of the sector:
 - Support to individuals and groups of micro-enterprises.
 - Branding and Marketing support.
 - Support the strengthening of institutions.
 - Setting up a robust project management framework.
- Financial Support:
 - Support to Individual micro-units:
 - Micro enterprises will get credit-linked subsidy at 35% of the eligible project cost, with a ceiling of Rs.10 lakh.
 - The beneficiary contribution will be a minimum of 10%, and the balance from the loan.
 - Support to FPOs/SHGs/Cooperatives:
 - Seed capital will be given to SHGs (at Rs. 4 lakh per SHG) for loans to members for working capital and small tools.
 - Grant for backward/ forward linkages, common infrastructure, packaging, marketing, and branding.
- The Eligible Borrowers for PMFMPE can be:
 - Farmer Producer Organization (FPO)
 - Self-Help Groups
 - Co-operatives
 - Existing Micro Food Processing Entrepreneurs
 - New Units, whether for individuals or groups, would only be supported for One District One Product (ODOP).

2. India Stack

- Recently, India and Colombia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the field of Sharing Successful Digital Solutions Implemented at Population Scale which intends to promote digital transformation via India Stack.

About India Stack:

- It is a set of Application Programming Interface (APIs) that allows governments, businesses, startups and developers to utilise a unique digital Infrastructure.
- India Stack consists of three layers of open APIs: identity, payments, and data.

- Although the name of this project bears the word India, the vision of India Stack is not limited to one country.
- It can be applied to any nation, be it a developed one or an emerging one.
- The four distinct technology layers provided are
 - Presenceless layer: Where a universal biometric digital identity allows people to participate in any service from anywhere in the country.
 - Paperless layer: Where digital records move with an individual's digital identity, eliminating the need for massive amount of paper collection and storage.
 - Cashless layer: Where a single interface to all the country's bank accounts and wallets to democratize payments.
 - Consent layer: Which allows data to move freely and securely to democratize the market for data?
- Some of the APIs that are a central part of India Stack: Aadhaar Proof, Aadhaar e-KYC, e-Sign, Digital Locker, Unified Payment Interface.

3. Anti-Satellite Weapon

- Russia is actively working towards a formidable new development in space technology, focusing on creating a nuclear anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon.

About Anti-Satellite Weapon:

- It is designed to debilitate and/or destroy satellites that are already in orbit and operational.
- Types of Anti-Satellite Weapons: ASATs are broadly classified into two types namely
 - Kinetic energy methods: This involves launching a missile that intercepts and physically collides with the target satellite to destroy it.
 - The kinetic energy ASATs physically collide with satellites and can reach altitudes. These ASATs can be ballistic missiles, drones, and other satellites.
 - Non-kinetic methods: They use non-physical attacks such as cyber-attacks, jamming, and even lasers to blind satellites without physically destroying them.
- All of these attacks can be launched from the air, low orbit, or even ground installations.
- These can even undertake pellet cloud attacks on enemy's low orbit satellites.
- Other ASAT capabilities include cyber-attacks on space systems, Electro-Magnetic Pulse (EMP) explosion devices, directed energy (laser based) weapons and targeted missiles for destruction of satellites to sabotage the enemy's military operations.
- There are many countries which have this capability, but only four countries — including India — have demonstrated their ASAT capabilities.
- Issues:
 - These weapons generate tremendous amount space debris, which poses a hazard to all space operations, including civilian and commercial satellites.

4. National Science Day 2024

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology recently released the theme for the "National Science Day 2024", titled "Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat".

About National Science Day (NSD):

- It is celebrated every year on February 28 to mark the contributions of scientists towards the development of the country.
- On this day, in 1928, Indian Physicists Sir CV Raman made an important discovery in the field of spectroscopy, which was later named after him: the Raman Effect.
 - For this discovery, he was also awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930.
- History:
 - The National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC), in 1986, asked the Government of India to announce February 28 as National Science Day.
 - The government accepted and declared the day National Science Day.
 - The first National Science Day was celebrated on February 28, 1987.

What is the Raman Effect?

- The Raman effect is a change in the wavelength of light that occurs when a light beam is deflected by molecules.
- When a beam of light traverses a dust-free, transparent sample of a chemical compound, a small fraction of the light emerges in directions other than those of the incident (incoming) beam.
- Most of this scattered light is of an unchanged wavelength. A small part, however, has wavelengths different from that of the incident light; its presence is a result of the Raman Effect.

5. Magnetoelectric multiferroics

- Researchers have identified a unique mechanism of electric polarization via magnetic ordering in a novel mineral named "MnBi₂S₄", which can be useful for energy efficient data storage.

About Magnetoelectric multiferroics:

- These are a special class of materials popular among the research fraternity for their rarity and unique properties.

- These materials can exhibit both magnetism and ferroelectricity simultaneously.
- Application: For advanced technology applications like spintronics, electronic memory devices, and other electronic components like actuators and switches.
- What is MnBi₂S₄?
- It is also known as mineral graffianite and belongs to the ternary manganese chalcogenide family.
- It has distinct magnetic structures in the material, including a spin density wave, as well as cycloidal and helical spin structures.
- It is also known to be centrosymmetric, undergoes magnetic ordering at low temperatures (27, 23, and 21.5 Kelvins).

Significance of the study:

- The significance of this finding lies in the strong coupling between magnetism and electric polarization.
- The unique mechanism, driven by magnetic frustration, represents a breakthrough in magnetoelectric coupling.
- Specifically, if the material possesses the ability to exhibit the same phenomena at room temperature, it could pave the way for energy-efficient manipulation of spin using small electric fields.
- This could revolutionize data storage by reducing energy consumption during writing processes.
- These findings can be helpful for the development of four-state logic memory system, providing additional degrees of freedom for device performance compared to the current binary logic systems.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Financial empowerment of women is a pre-requisite for overall development of Indian society. In light of this statement discuss the desired steps needed to generate Sustainable Livelihood for women?

Answer: Financially empowered rural women, are key to the success of families, communities and national economies. Women are key agents for achieving the transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development.

Desired steps to generate sustainable livelihood for Women:

- Disseminate information in formats accessible and understandable by women given the women's low level of literacy and lower access to communication techs.
- We need to ensure female farmers' access to markets and agriculture resources.
- Agriculture stimulus packages and subsidies must include specific targets for women.
- Credit lines can be set up with lower interest rate for women.
- Funding of women's organisations should be done that provide protection against domestic violence.
- By making efforts to increase women's representation in local institutions and governance mechanisms and include them in decision making within their households and communities.
- Minimise the gulf between ownership versus control of land.
- There should be a special thrust formation of Women Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO), under the GoI's 10,000 FPOs scheme.
- Increase vocational training, skill-building and entrepreneurship training programme.

In recent years, the government of India has given major impetus in this direction. Such as:

- Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK) aims to empower rural women with opportunities for skill development and employment.
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) is an apex micro finance organisation that provides micro credit at concessional terms to poor women for various livelihood and income generating activities.
- The National Crèche Scheme ensures that women take up gainful employment through providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment to the children.
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana aims to provide housing under the name of the women also.
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) aims to enable a large number of Indian youths including women to take up industry-relevant skill training in securing a better livelihood.
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) focuses on creating opportunities for women in skill development, leading to market-based employment.
- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana empowers women and protects their health by providing LPG cylinder free of cost.
- Sukanya Samriddhi Yojna (SSY) scheme has empowered many girls economically by opening their bank accounts.
- Skill Upgradation and Mahila Coir Yojna is an exclusive training programme of MSME aimed at skill development of women artisans engaged in coir industry.
- Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) is a major credit-linked subsidy programme aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector.
- To promote female entrepreneurship, the government has initiated Programmes like Stand-Up India and Mahila e-Haat (online marketing platform to support women entrepreneurs/ SHGs/NGOs), Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme (ESSDP).

- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) provides access to institutional finance to micro and small businesses.

Conclusion

Empowered women are a key not only to the well-being of individuals, families and rural communities, but also to overall economic productivity. Empowered women fuel the thriving economies, spurring productivity and growth.

MCQs

- Dinesh Goswami Committee and Indrajit Gupta Committee are associated with which of the following?
 - Nationalisation of Banks
 - Electoral Reforms**
 - Greenwashing
 - Higher Education
- Consider the following statements regarding the Financial Action Task Force (FATF):
 - It was established by G7 countries to combat money laundering.
 - FATF's grey list deals with countries with weak measures to combat Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing regimes.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2**
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- Regarding Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in India, consider the following statements:
 - DPIs mediate the flow of people, money, and information.
 - India became the first country to develop all three foundational DPIs: Digital identity (Aadhar), Real-time fast payment (UPI), and Account Aggregator built on the Data Empowerment Protection Architecture (DEPA).
 - The Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA) establishes a digital framework enabling users to share their data solely under the terms defined by a third-party entity.
 How many of the above statements are correct?
 - Only one
 - Only two**
 - All three
 - None of the above
- Consider the following statements about Interpol Notice:
 - Blue Notice is an "enquiry notice," enables police forces in member states to exchange crucial crime-related information.
 - Blue Corner notices are issued before the filing of criminal charges.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - 1 only
 - 2 only
 - Both 1 and 2**
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- Consider the following statements:
 - M.H. Marigowda is considered the Father of Indian Horticulture.
 - India is the 2nd largest producer and exporter of fruits and vegetables.
 - Productivity of horticulture crops is much higher compared to productivity of food grains.
 How many of the statements given above are correct?
 - Only one
 - Only two**
 - All three
 - None of the above
- Consider the following pairs:

Turtle-----IUCN Status

 - Olive Ridley Turtle----Vulnerable
 - Leatherback Turtle-----Endangered
 - Loggerhead Turtle-----Vulnerable
 - Hawksbill Turtle-----Near Threatened
 How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?
 - Only one pair
 - Only two pairs**
 - Only three pairs
 - All four pairs
- With reference to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention), consider the following statements:
 - It is the only global and UN-based intergovernmental organisation established exclusively for the conservation and management of terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range.
 - The convention imposes trade sanctions on countries that violate species protection.
 - Its objective is to eliminate trade in wildlife and wildlife products.
 How many of the statements given above are correct?
 - Only one**
 - Only two
 - All three
 - None of the above
- Cuscuta dodder is a plant categorized as:
 - Epiphyte
 - Parasite**
 - Autotroph
 - Saprophyte
- Consider the following statements regarding the Bubonic Plague:
 - It is viral infection caused by Epstein-Barr virus (EBV).
 - It spreads between animals and humans through flea bites, direct contact with infected tissues, and inhaling infected respiratory droplets.
 - There is no cure available for the treatment of the Bubonic Plague.
 Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?
 - 1 and 2 only
 - 2 only**
 - 2 and 3 only
 - 3 only
- Which of the following best describes the PSiFI system, recently seen in the news?
 - A wearable device for monitoring heart rate
 - A voice recognition technology
 - A system for recognizing human emotions**
 - A virtual reality headset