



**An Institute for Civil Services**

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**IAS 2024**

# **INTERVIEW GUIDANCE SERIES**

**Current Affairs  
& Major Debates  
*of*  
SOCIETY**



**An Institute for Civil Services**

# INTERVIEW GUIDANCE PROGRAMME 2024

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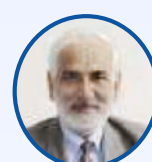
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# SOCIETY

## 1 Validity of Hindu Marriages

### ▣ Context:

The Supreme Court recently ruled that a Hindu marriage is **not valid** unless the ceremonies prescribed under the **Hindu Marriage Act, 1955**, are performed.

### ▣ Key-highlights: The court emphasized the following points:

- **Ceremonial Necessity:** **Section 7 of the Hindu Marriage Act** mandates that a Hindu marriage must be solemnized through customary rites and ceremonies. Without these, the marriage is not considered valid.
- **Saptapadi Requirement:** If the ceremony includes 'saptapadi' (seven steps taken together by the bride and groom), the marriage is only considered complete after the seventh step.
- **Registration Insufficiency:** **Section 8 of the Act** deals with marriage registration, which requires proof of performing the necessary ceremonies. A marriage certificate alone, without these rites, does not confer marital status.
- **Spiritual and Legal Importance:** The court highlighted the dual material and spiritual significance of these ceremonies, transforming the individuals spiritually and legally into husband and wife.
- **Societal Impact:** The judgment underscored marriage's role in fostering a dignified, equal, and consensual union, supporting family and societal stability.

### ▣ The Evolving Perception of Marriage in Modern India (Shifts in Social Norms and Values)

- **Increased Individualism:** Growing emphasis on personal choice and happiness, leading to prioritization of individual goals over traditional marital expectations.
- **Alternative Living Arrangements:** Acceptance of live-in relationships, delayed marriages, and remaining single.
- **Changing Gender Roles:** Economic independence and empowerment of women have allowed for greater freedom in making personal decisions about marriage.

### ▣ Economic Factors:

- **Economic Independence:** Financial independence, especially among women, has reduced the economic necessity of marriage, enabling marriages based on love and compatibility.
- **Urbanization:** Urban lifestyles promote later marriages and diverse family structures.
- **Educational and Awareness Factors:**
  - **Higher Education:** Education fosters critical thinking and questioning of traditional norms, leading to more egalitarian relationships.
  - **Legal Awareness:** Awareness of legal rights regarding marriage, divorce, and inheritance empowers informed decisions.

### ▣ Cultural and Religious Influences:

- **Globalization:** Exposure to global cultures blends traditional and modern views on marriage.
- **Changing Attitudes towards Divorce:** Increasing acceptance of divorce as a solution to marital problems reflects a shift from viewing marriage as an unbreakable sacrament to a partnership based on mutual fulfillment.

### ■ Statistical Trends:

- **Marriage and Divorce Rates:** Declining marriage rates, increasing age at marriage, and rising divorce rates suggest changing attitudes towards marriage.
- **Legalization of Same-Sex Marriages:** Legal and social acceptance of same-sex marriages reflects the evolving understanding of marriage.

### ■ Balancing Tradition and Modernity:

- **Continued Value of Rituals:** Many still value traditional rituals and view marriage as a significant cultural and religious event.
- **Hybrid Practices:** Some couples blend traditional practices with modern values, maintaining marriage's cultural and emotional significance.

### ■ Interview Question

- Q:1. What are the key points emphasized by the Supreme Court in its recent ruling regarding the validity of Hindu marriages under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955? How does this ruling impact the societal understanding of marriage in India?
- Q:2. Why is the performance of prescribed ceremonies, including 'saptapadi,' essential for the legal validity of a Hindu marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955?
- Q:3. How have economic independence, urbanization, and changing gender roles influenced the evolving perceptions of marriage in India?
- Q:4. What role do education and legal awareness play in shaping modern attitudes towards marriage, and how do these factors contribute to more informed decisions about relationships and family structures in India?

## 2 Live-in Relationship in Indian Society

### ■ Context:

- Live-in relationships, although not explicitly recognized by Indian laws, have gained prominence in contemporary society. These relationships challenge traditional notions of marriage and cohabitation, raising important questions about **morality, legality, and societal acceptance**.

### ■ Societal Perspective:

- **Debates and Morality:** In Indian society, the concept of live-in relationships has sparked debates and discussions regarding morality and social norms. While some view these relationships as progressive and reflective of individual freedom, others perceive them as immoral or culturally unacceptable.
- **Stigma:** Faces societal disapproval, especially in conservative communities.

### ■ Growth Factors:

- Urbanization, globalization, and Western values contribute to acceptance.

### ■ Implications:

- **Changing Norms:** Challenges traditional views of marriage and family.
- **Stigma:** Affects social standing and relationships.
- **Legal Ambiguity:** Uncertainty in property, inheritance, and child custody rights.
- **Impact on Children:** Faces societal judgment and legal issues.
- **Marriage Impact:** Alters perceptions, leading to more cohabitation and delayed marriages.
- **Positive Effects:** Offers personal freedom, compatibility testing, flexibility, emotional support, and stronger community bonds.

Positive Effects	Negative Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Personal Freedom:</b> Offers individuals the freedom to choose their living arrangements and test compatibility before committing to marriage.</li> <li>◦ <b>Flexibility and Emotional Support:</b> Provides flexibility in relationship dynamics and emotional support, enhancing overall well-being and relationship satisfaction.</li> <li>◦ <b>Community Bonds:</b> Can strengthen bonds within supportive communities and foster a more inclusive and accepting social environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Social Disapproval:</b> Individuals in live-in relationships often face social stigma and discrimination, impacting their social relationships and community acceptance.</li> <li>◦ <b>Legal Vulnerability:</b> Without legal recognition, partners may face difficulties in accessing legal protections related to property, inheritance, and child custody in case of separation or death.</li> <li>◦ <b>Family and Community Strain:</b> Live-in relationships may strain relationships with extended family members who may not approve of or accept such arrangements.</li> <li>◦ <b>Psychological Impact:</b> Constant societal judgment and lack of acceptance can lead to stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation for individuals in live-in relationships.</li> </ul>

### Interview Questions

- Q:1. How do live-in relationships challenge traditional marriage views in India?
- Q:2. What factors contribute to the growing acceptance of live-in relationships?
- Q:3. What legal issues do individuals in live-in relationships face?
- Q:4. How does societal stigma affect individuals in live-in relationships?
- Q:5. What are the positive and negative impacts of live-in relationships on society?

## 3 Raising Legal Age for Marriage:

### Context:

The Government of India has announced plans to increase the minimum legal age of marriage for women **from 18 to 21 years**. This decision, which will **amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006**, and other personal laws, follows recommendations from a four-member **task force led by former Samata Party chief Jaya Jaitly**.

### Present Scenario in India

- **Child Marriage Statistics:**
  - **National Overview:** Approximately 35% of females in India are married before the age of 21 years.
  - **State Variations:** In West Bengal, the average age of marriage is 20.9 years, and nearly 47% of females marry before turning 21. This rate is higher than states like Bihar and Rajasthan.
  - **Rural-Urban Divide:** Child marriage prevalence is significantly higher in rural areas (14.1%) compared to urban areas (6.9%) among girls aged 15–19 years.
- **Maternal Health Concerns:**
  - **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR):** India's maternal mortality ratio improved from 130 (2014–2016) to 113 (2016–18). However, it remains far above the UN Sustainable Development Goals target of 70 deaths per 100,000 live births.
  - **Regional Disparities:** States like Assam (215), Uttar Pradesh (197), and Madhya Pradesh (173) have higher MMRs, indicating challenges in maternal health care.



◦ **Impact of Child Marriage on Maternal Health:**

- **Higher Risk:** Maternal deaths disproportionately affect younger mothers, highlighting the health risks associated with early pregnancies and childbirth.
- **Need for Improvement:** Addressing child marriage is crucial for reducing maternal mortality and achieving better health outcomes for women and children in India.

Pros:	Cons:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Lowering Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR):</b> Higher marriage age reduces health risks associated with early childbirth.</li> <li>◦ <b>Improved Nutrition:</b> Delayed marriages allow girls more time to attain better health before pregnancy.</li> <li>◦ <b>Financial Empowerment:</b> Women can pursue higher education and careers, contributing to economic growth and gender equality.</li> <li>◦ <b>Increased Labor Force Participation:</b> Higher marriage age correlates with higher female graduation rates and workforce engagement, enhancing economic productivity.</li> <li>◦ <b>Women and Child Welfare:</b> Delayed marriages can alleviate poverty among mothers, improving nutrition and health outcomes for both mothers and children.</li> <li>◦ <b>Empowerment and Gender Parity:</b> Delayed childbearing enhances women's decision-making power, educational attainment, and overall living conditions.</li> <li>◦ <b>Tackling Child Marriage:</b> Increasing the marriage age helps curb the prevalence of child marriages, which remains a significant issue in India.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <b>Difficulty in Enforcement:</b> Implementation of laws against child marriage is complex and often ineffective.</li> <li>◦ <b>Penalization of Self-Arranged Marriages:</b> Laws are sometimes used to penalize young adults in self-arranged marriages rather than preventing child marriages effectively.</li> <li>◦ <b>Limited Impact on Decline:</b> Despite legal efforts, child marriage rates have only marginally decreased, remaining prevalent in marginalized communities.</li> <li>◦ <b>Pushing Marriages Underground:</b> Stricter laws may drive child marriages underground rather than eliminating them, especially in deprived communities.</li> <li>◦ <b>Criminalization Concerns:</b> Many women marrying before the legal age would lack legal protections, potentially criminalizing their families under new laws.</li> <li>◦ <b>Education as a Barrier:</b> Lack of education among girls contributes significantly to early marriages, highlighting broader social challenges beyond legal reforms.</li> </ul>

▢ **Interview Questions**

- Q:1. How does child marriage impact maternal health in India?
- Q:2. What are the advantages of raising the legal marriage age to 21?
- Q:3. What challenges exist in enforcing the law against child marriage?
- Q:4. How might the new law affect self-arranged marriages and criminalization concerns?

**Women and Related Issues**

## 4 Women-angle to unemployment

- **Preface:** By addressing the given challenges, societies can create an environment that fosters equal opportunities for women in the workforce, contributing to overall economic growth and development. Recognising and dismantling **gender-based barriers** is not only a matter of social justice but also a fundamental aspect of building a resilient and inclusive economy.

- **Lower female labour force participation:** As per the PLFS survey 2021-22; in rural areas, the labour force participation rate (LFPR) for men is 56.9 per cent, while for women it is far less at 27.2 per cent. In urban areas, the gender gap in LFPR is far worse, with 58.3 per cent LFPR for men and 18.8 per cent for women.
  - ▶ As per the PLFS survey 2021-22; in rural areas, the labour force participation rate (LFPR) for men is 56.9 per cent, while for women it is far less at 27.2 per cent. In urban areas, the gender gap in LFPR is far worse, with 58.3 per cent LFPR for men and 18.8 per cent for women.
- **Gender wage gap:** Women often face a gender wage gap, earning less than their male counterparts for similar roles. According to UN Women, women in India earn significantly less than men. The gender pay gap was about 28 per cent in 2018-19 and increased by another 7 per cent due to the pandemic. Addressing pay disparities is vital for ensuring equal economic opportunities and reducing gender-based unemployment.
- **Occupational segregation:** Women are disproportionately represented in certain industries and occupations, often in sectors with lower pay and fewer advancement opportunities. Current trends include feminisation of agriculture and poverty. Encouraging diversity across all sectors and challenging occupational stereotypes can contribute to more inclusive employment.
- **Work-life balance:** Balancing work and family responsibilities can be a significant challenge for women, impacting their career choices and opportunities. Policies that support flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and affordable childcare can enhance women's participation in the workforce.
- **Access to education:** Unequal access to quality education can limit women's ability to acquire the skills needed for well-paying jobs. Promoting education for girls and women in STEM fields and vocational training is essential for breaking down barriers to employment.
- **Entrepreneurship opportunities:** Facilitating women's entry into entrepreneurship can be a powerful strategy for addressing unemployment. Providing financial support, mentorship programs, and networking opportunities can empower women to create and sustain businesses.
- **Discrimination and bias:** Gender-based discrimination and bias in hiring practices can limit women's access to job opportunities. Raising awareness, implementing fair hiring practices, and promoting diversity and inclusion are essential steps toward overcoming these challenges.
- **Digital gender divide:** Women may face barriers in accessing and utilizing digital technologies, impacting their participation in the digital economy. **NFHS V** highlighted that only one in three women in India have ever used the internet, compared to more than half (**57 per cent**) of men. Bridging the digital gender divide through training programs and infrastructure development is crucial for enhancing women's employability.
- **Violence and harassment at work:** Workplace harassment and violence can deter women from seeking or maintaining employment. Creating safe and inclusive work environments with robust policies against harassment is essential for women's economic participation.

## 5 Hysterectomies in India

### ▣ Context:

The lack of comprehensive data on women-specific health issues, such as hysterectomies, hampers effective policymaking and awareness in India. A recent study explores the prevalence and reasons behind hysterectomies among women aged 45 and above.

- **About:** Hysterectomy, the surgical removal of the uterus, is a common procedure globally, often performed to alleviate symptoms of gynecological disorders like fibroids, uterovaginal prolapse, and ovarian cysts. While it offers health benefits, it also carries long-term implications such as early menopause and increased risks of cardiovascular disease and urinary incontinence.

### ▣ Key Findings:

- **Common Reasons:** Heavy menstrual bleeding, fibroids, and uterine prolapse are the leading causes for hysterectomies.

- **Regional Disparities:** Higher rates of hysterectomies are reported in southern and western India.
  - **Associated Factors:** Higher likelihood of undergoing hysterectomy correlates with education level, socioeconomic status, and age at marriage.
  - **Patriarchal Influence:** Patriarchal norms and misconceptions contribute to unnecessary hysterectomies.
  - **Vulnerable Groups:** Women from marginalized communities and those with multiple children are particularly at risk.
  - **Impact of patriarchal norms and misconceptions on the incidence of unnecessary hysterectomies in India:**
  - Misinformation and Lack of Awareness:
- **Patriarchal norms lead to misinformation about women's health, including misconceptions about menstruation, reproductive health, and the necessity of hysterectomies.**
- **Preference for Male Child and Family Pressure:** Strong societal preference for male children often leads to pressure on women to undergo hysterectomies after bearing sons, under the belief that further childbearing is unnecessary.
  - **Medical Exploitation and Financial Incentives:** Unethical practices by some doctors exploit patriarchal norms for financial gain, performing unnecessary hysterectomies due to women's lack of autonomy and understanding of their health rights.
  - **Healthcare Access and Empowerment:** Patriarchal norms restrict women's access to healthcare and decision-making authority, discouraging them from seeking second opinions or questioning medical advice.
  - **Legal and Policy Frameworks:** Existing legal frameworks to protect patients from medical malpractice sometimes fail to address unnecessary hysterectomies, influenced by societal stigmatization and legal barriers faced by women.
  - **Psychological Impact:** Beyond physical repercussions, unnecessary hysterectomies cause emotional distress, loss of self-esteem, and disruption of familial and social roles, exacerbated by patriarchal devaluation of women's reproductive health.
- **Issues Associated with Hysterectomy:**
- **Health Risks:** Hysterectomies are linked to chronic diseases such as cardiovascular events, cancers, depression, metabolic disorders, and dementia.
  - **Other Conditions:** Increased risk of hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, and bone disease.
  - **Unnecessary Surgeries:** Many women undergo hysterectomies unnecessarily, emphasizing the need for alternative treatments and informed decision-making among patients. Medical professionals highlight the importance of non-surgical options.

■ **Interview Questions**

- Q:1. What are the common reasons for hysterectomies among women in India?
- Q:2. Which regions in India report higher rates of hysterectomies?
- Q:3. How do patriarchal norms contribute to unnecessary hysterectomies in India?
- Q:4. What are the long-term health risks associated with hysterectomies?
- Q:5. How does socioeconomic status influence the likelihood of undergoing a hysterectomy in India?



## 6 Equal Participation of Women in Workforce

### Context

The Supreme Court said that denying child care leave to working mothers of disabled children violated the constitutional mandate for equal participation of women in the workforce.

### Significance of Child-Care Leaves (CCL)

- **Constitutional entitlement:** A bench of Supreme Court emphasised that the participation of women in the work force is not just a matter of privilege but constitutional entitlement by **Article 15 of the Constitution**.
- **Violation of constitutional mandate:** The provision of CCL to women subserves an important constitutional object, and denying the same to mothers of children with disabilities would **violate the constitutional duty** to ensure equal women participation in the workforce.

### Barriers addressed by SC ruling

- **Systematic barriers:** Women faces systematic barriers in balancing their professional careers with caregiving duties, particularly when they have children with disabilities.
- **Gender disparity and undermined children's rights:** Denying child care leave to these mothers not only perpetuates gender disparities in the workforce but also undermines the rights of children with disabilities to receive adequate care and support from their parents.
- **State's obligations:** The ruling emphasizes the obligation of the state and employers to adopt inclusive policies that promote gender equality and support the diverse needs of working parents, including those with children with disabilities.



### FACT BOX

#### Supreme Court on Denying child-care leaves to mother

- The Supreme Court said that denying child care leave to working mothers of disabled children violated the constitutional mandate for equal participation of women in the workforce.
- Significance of Child-Care Leaves (CCL)
  - **Constitutional entitlement:** A bench of Supreme Court emphasised that the participation of women in the work force is not just a matter of privilege but constitutional entitlement by **Article 15 of the Constitution**.
  - **Violation of constitutional mandate:** The court said the provision of Child-Care Leaves (CCL) to women subserves an important constitutional object, and denying the same to mothers of children with disabilities would **violate the constitutional duty** to ensure equal women participation in the workforce.

### Interview Questions

- Q:1. How did the Supreme Court rule regarding child care leave (CCL) for working mothers of disabled children?
- Q:2. Which constitutional article does the Supreme Court refer to regarding equal participation of women in the workforce?
- Q:3. What are the systematic barriers that women face in balancing work and caregiving duties?

- Q:4.** How does denying child care leave to mothers of children with disabilities perpetuate gender disparity in the workforce?
- Q:5.** What obligation does the Supreme Court emphasize for the state and employers in terms of supporting working parents?

## 7. Impact of Non-Participation of Married Women in the Workforce in India

### Context:

The non-participation of married women in India's workforce has significant economic and social impacts, given their substantial representation among the working-age population.

### Macro Impact of Low Women's Labor Force Participation

- **Economic Impact:** Reduced female labor force participation hampers national economic growth and affects intra-household decision-making power.
- **Gender Disparities:** Persistent gender disparities exist in work roles and remuneration.
- **Global Trends in Female Labor Force Participation**
  - **Global Participation Rates:** Worldwide female labor force participation was 47.3% in 2022.
  - **Decline in Developing Nations:** Female LFPR in India declined from 28% to 24% between 1990 and 2022.

### Challenges for Married Women in the Labour Market

- **Post-Marriage Decline:** Women's LFPR declines after marriage due to limited education, family obligations, and societal disapproval.
- **Influencing Factors:** Religion, caste, geography, wealth, and societal norms significantly affect women's labor market entry.

### Professional Challenges for Married Women

- **Employment Preferences:** Post-marriage, women prefer flexible, close-to-home jobs.
- **Professional Costs:** Gender-based costs lead to disparities in career choices, income, age at marriage, and fertility decisions.
- **Socioeconomic Influence:** Women's labor market engagement is influenced by their socioeconomic status.

### Marriage's Impact on Labor Force Participation

- **Employment Rates:** Married women aged 25-49 show lower employment rates, with a 5% decrease in FLFPR from 2004-05 to 2022-23.
- **Educational Impact:** Illiterate women are more likely to participate in the labor force after marriage compared to well-educated women.

### Sectoral Trends and Promoting Women's Empowerment

- **Dominant Sector:** Agriculture is the main sector for female employment.
- **Cultural Influence:** Social and cultural factors play a significant role in women's labor market entry.
- **Day-Care Services:** Adequate day-care services are crucial for increasing female labor force participation.

### Interview Questions

- Q:1. How does the non-participation of married women in India's workforce impact the national economy?
- Q:2. What is the global female labor force participation rate in 2022, and how does India's rate compare?
- Q:3. What are the main reasons for the decline in women's labor force participation after marriage in India?
- Q:4. How do socioeconomic factors influence married women's participation in the labor market?
- Q:5. What sector is most dominant for female employment in India, and what role do cultural factors play in women's labor market entry?

## 8 Gender Disparities in Poverty

### Context:

- The United Nations' recent gender snapshot highlights a concerning trend: women aged 55 to 59 are more likely to live in extreme poverty globally. This disparity stems from various factors, including career interruptions, lower earnings, and disproportionate unpaid care responsibilities.

### Poverty and Women:

- Many women reach old age without sufficient assets, savings, or adequate pension plans.
- Career interruptions, part-time employment, and lower earnings contribute to their economic vulnerability.
- Lack of social protection benefits exacerbates the financial insecurity faced by aging women.

### Impact:

- Without intervention, the UN predicts that 340 million women and girls could be living in extreme poverty by 2030.
- Microcredit and micro-enterprise development initiatives are hailed for empowering women and addressing poverty.
- However, the neoliberal model of microcredit, characterized by high lending costs, can perpetuate a debt trap for vulnerable borrowers.

### Interview Questions

- Q:1. What factors contribute to the higher likelihood of women aged 55-59 living in extreme poverty globally?
- Q:2. How do career interruptions and lower earnings contribute to the economic vulnerability of women in old age?
- Q:3. What is the predicted global impact of extreme poverty on women and girls by 2030?
- Q:4. How does microfinancing, particularly through Self-Help Groups (SHGs), help reduce poverty among women?
- Q:5. Give examples of microfinancing initiatives that have helped women in India and Bangladesh, and explain their impact.

## 9 Women in Corporate Roles in India

### Context

- The representation of women in corporate roles in India has long been below 30% and has shown signs of stagnation or even decline in the post-pandemic years. This trend is highlighted in a report by LinkedIn titled "Women in Leadership in Corporate India."

### Factors Contributing to Decline

- Reduction in hybrid or work-from-home roles** has suppressed the growth of female participation in the corporate labor market.
- Women still face significant obstacles in reaching leadership roles due to **bias, societal norms, and structural barriers**.
- Structural barriers such as **lack of access to education, limited professional networks, and inadequate support systems** for working mothers also play significant roles.

### Societal Analysis

- From a societal perspective, the underrepresentation of women in corporate leadership roles in India reflects broader gender inequality issues.
- Gender Norms and Biases:** Deep-rooted societal norms and biases against women in leadership positions need to be addressed through education and awareness programs.
- Structural Barriers:** Policies and initiatives should focus on removing structural barriers that prevent women from advancing in their careers.
- Support Systems:** Enhancing support systems for women, such as affordable childcare and flexible working conditions, can help increase their participation in the workforce.
- Role Models and Mentors:** Encouraging successful women leaders to serve as role models and mentors can inspire and guide other women in their professional journeys.

### Interview Questions

- Q:1. What factors have contributed to the stagnation or decline of women's representation in corporate roles in India post-pandemic?
- Q:2. How do structural barriers, such as lack of education and professional networks, hinder women's advancement in corporate leadership roles in India?
- Q:3. What societal norms and biases need to be addressed to improve female representation in leadership positions in India?
- Q:4. What support systems are crucial for enhancing women's participation in the corporate workforce in India?
- Q:5. How can role models and mentors help increase the representation of women in corporate leadership roles?

## 10. Role of the 'Gig Economy' in the Process of Empowerment of Women in India

### Context:

The gig economy, characterized by short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs, has emerged as a significant sector in the global and Indian economy. This new mode of work offers flexibility and opportunities, making it a crucial element in the discourse on

women's empowerment. In India, the gig economy holds the potential to address several barriers faced by women in traditional employment, thereby contributing to their economic and social empowerment.

## ■ Opportunities for Women's Empowerment through the Gig Economy

### ■ Flexibility and Work-Life Balance:

- ▶ **Time Management:** Gig work often allows women to balance professional commitments with household responsibilities, which is particularly beneficial in a society where women frequently bear the brunt of domestic duties.
- ▶ **Remote Work:** Many gig roles can be performed remotely, enabling women to work from home and thereby bypass issues related to commuting and safety.

### ■ Economic Independence:

- ▶ **Income Generation:** Participation in the gig economy provides women with opportunities to earn their own income, fostering financial independence and reducing economic dependence on family members.
- ▶ **Entrepreneurial Ventures:** Platforms like Etsy, UrbanClap (now Urban Company), and others enable women to monetize skills such as crafting, baking, tutoring, and other services.

### ■ Skill Development and Learning:

- ▶ **Skill Enhancement:** Gig platforms often offer training programs, upskilling opportunities, and exposure to diverse projects, allowing women to enhance their skills and employability.
- ▶ **Access to Information:** The gig economy provides access to a wealth of online resources and communities that support learning and professional growth.

### ■ Inclusive Workforce:

- ▶ **Low Entry Barriers:** Many gig roles require minimal formal education or qualifications, allowing women from varied backgrounds to participate.
- ▶ **Empowerment of Marginalized Groups:** Women from marginalized communities or those who have faced employment gaps due to family commitments can re-enter the workforce through gig roles.

## ■ Challenges Faced by Women in the Gig Economy

### ■ Lack of Job Security:

- ▶ **Unstable Income:** The gig economy is characterized by irregular work and income, which can be precarious for women seeking stable financial security.
- ▶ **Absence of Benefits:** Gig workers often lack access to traditional employment benefits such as health insurance, paid leave, and retirement plans.

### ■ Workplace Protections:

- ▶ **Safety Concerns:** Women working in gig roles, especially in services requiring travel or home visits, may face safety and harassment issues.
- ▶ **Legal and Regulatory Gaps:** There is a lack of comprehensive legal protections for gig workers, leading to vulnerabilities related to exploitation and unfair practices.

### ■ Digital Divide:

- ▶ **Access to Technology:** Women, particularly in rural areas, may face challenges related to access to technology and digital literacy, hindering their participation in the gig economy.
- ▶ **Internet Connectivity:** Reliable internet access is crucial for gig work, yet many regions in India still struggle with connectivity issues.



## Interview Questions

- Q:1. How does the flexibility offered by the gig economy benefit women's work-life balance in India?
- Q:2. What opportunities does the gig economy provide for women to achieve economic independence?
- Q:3. How does the gig economy contribute to skill development and learning for women in India?
- Q:4. What are the challenges women face in the gig economy, particularly regarding job security and workplace protections?
- Q:5. How does the digital divide impact women's participation in the gig economy, especially in rural India?

## 11 Abortion Rights

### Context:

France includes right to abortion in its constitution, influenced by developments in the US where abortion rights were restricted.

### Provisions in India:

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 2021 allows all women in India (married and unmarried) to abort a foetus up to **20 weeks of pregnancy** and **24 weeks for women** under **special conditions**.
- The MTP Act allows for abortion after 24 weeks only if there is a threat to the woman's life or if there is a foetal anomaly. **"Rule 3B" of Rules** annexed to the MTP Act, which was amended in 2021, specifies seven categories of women who are eligible for termination between 20-24 weeks.
  - ▶ survivors of sexual assault or rape or incest
  - ▶ minors
  - ▶ those who have a change of marital status during the ongoing pregnancy (widowhood and divorce)
  - ▶ women with physical disabilities
  - ▶ mentally ill women
  - ▶ women carrying a malformed foetus that has a substantial risk of being incompatible with life
  - ▶ and women with pregnancy in humanitarian settings or disasters or emergencies as may be declared by the government

### Arguments in Favor of Abortion:

- ▶ **Mothers' Rights:** Prioritize mother's rights over foetus, considering her as a moral person entitled to life.
- ▶ **Unwarranted Denial:** Denying abortion when pregnancy is unintended is deemed unwarranted.
- ▶ **Self-defense:** Abortion justified to defend mother's mental or physical health, aligning with the 'Doctrine of double effect'.

### ■ Arguments Against Abortion:

- ▶ **'Future like Ours' Argument:** Abortion deprives foetus of potential future experiences, suggesting death is inherently bad.
- ▶ **Moral Conduct:** Killing innocent human beings is morally wrong, with belief that human life begins at conception.

### ■ Interview Questions

- Q:1. What are the provisions of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 2021 in India?
- Q:2. Under what special conditions can women in India undergo abortion after 24 weeks of pregnancy?
- Q:3. What are some of the categories of women eligible for abortion between 20–24 weeks under the MTP Act?
- Q:4. What are the main arguments in favor of abortion rights?
- Q:5. What ethical concerns are raised by opponents of abortion?

## 12 The History of Abortion Rights In India and the US

### ■ Context:

Recently, the US Supreme Court voted 6–3 to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, removing abortion as a constitutional right. This decision sparked global debates on pro-life versus pro-choice stances. Amidst global discussions on abortion rights, it's essential to examine India's stance and the historical trajectory of abortion laws in the US and India.

### ■ Abortion Rights in the US

- **Pre-Roe Era:** Abortion was illegal in 30 states before the landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973.
- ***Roe v. Wade* (1973):** Legalized abortion nationwide based on the right to privacy, permitting it until fetal viability.
- ***Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992):** Upheld *Roe* while allowing states to impose restrictions, introducing the "undue burden" standard.
- ***Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* (2022):** Overturned previous precedents, enabling states to restrict abortion before viability.

### ■ Abortion Rights in India

- **Pre-1971:** Abortion was criminalized under section 312 of the Indian Penal Code.
- **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act (1971):** Legalized abortion up to 20 weeks under specific conditions like threat to maternal health, fetal abnormalities, rape, and contraceptive failure.
- **MTP Amendments Act (2021):** Extended abortion limit to 24 weeks, increased accessibility for unmarried women, and ensured privacy rights.

### ■ Conclusion

- **Legal Evolution:** Both countries have witnessed significant legal developments impacting abortion rights, reflecting changing societal norms and medical advancements.
- **Challenges and Progress:** While the US faces renewed debates and restrictions, India has expanded access and rights under progressive amendments to the MTP Act.

- **Global Discourse:** The issue remains contentious globally, affecting women's rights and healthcare policies across borders.

### ■ Interview Questions

- Q:1. What was the legal status of abortion in the US before the Roe v. Wade decision in 1973?**
- Q:2. How did the ruling in Planned Parenthood v. Casey (1992) impact abortion laws in the US?**
- Q:3. What significant changes were made to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act in India in 2021?**
- Q:4. What were the main conditions under which abortion was allowed in India before the MTP Act of 1971?**
- Q:5. How did the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health (2022) decision change abortion rights in the US?**

## 13 Surrogacy Rules in India

### ■ Context:

The Centre has tweaked the **surrogacy rules**, bringing relief for married couples aspiring to become parents.

### ■ The New Rules (Surrogacy (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2024)

- The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** has amended the **Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022**, allowing the use of donor gametes (eggs and sperm) if one of the intending couple has a medical condition. Previously, the Centre banned the use of **donor gametes in surrogacy**.
  - ▶ The new notification permits the use of donor gametes if the **District Medical Board** certifies a medical condition in either husband or wife, necessitating donor gametes.
  - ▶ The child must have at least one gamete from the intending couple.
  - ▶ These amendments do not apply to widowed or divorced women, and single unmarried women are barred from surrogacy.
- **Earlier Rules:** In 2023, **Rule 7** under the '**Consent of the Surrogate Mother and Agreement for Surrogacy**' mandated that both gametes should come from the intending couple. This rule was challenged and amended following a Supreme Court petition allowing a woman with **Mayer-Rokitansky-Kuster-Hauser (MRKH) syndrome** to use a donor egg for surrogacy.
- **Impact of the New Rules:** The amendments bring relief to couples struggling with infertility. Surrogacy is generally considered when other methods have failed, often involving older women who have tried various pregnancy methods before considering surrogacy.

### ■ Challenges to Surrogacy

- ▶ **Unawareness:** Surrogate mothers often lack knowledge of legal and medical procedures and associated risks.
- ▶ **No Recognition:** Surrogate mothers are not legally recognized and lack legal rights.
- ▶ **No International Recognition:** The absence of international surrogacy laws can leave parents and children vulnerable or stateless.
- ▶ **Profit-Making Profession:** Surrogacy is a lucrative USD 2.3-billion industry in India, often leading to unregulated practices.
- ▶ **Risk to Life:** Repeated pregnancies pose significant health risks to surrogate mothers.

- ▶ **Exploitation of Fundamental Rights:** Surrogate mothers receive minimal compensation, while medical professionals profit substantially. Surrogate mothers cannot refuse to give up the child, whereas intended parents can refuse to accept the child.

### ▣ Interview Questions

- Q:1. What change did the 2024 amendments to the Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules introduce regarding donor gametes?
- Q:2. Who certifies the medical condition that allows the use of donor gametes in surrogacy under the new rules?
- Q:3. Who is excluded from the eligibility for surrogacy under the 2024 amendments to the Surrogacy Rules?
- Q:4. What significant legal challenge led to the amendment of Rule 7 under the Surrogacy Regulation Rules?
- Q:5. What are some of the challenges faced by surrogate mothers in India according to the Surrogacy (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2024?

## 14 The Role of Male Membership

### ▣ Context:

Women's organizations have historically played a crucial role in advocating for gender equality, women's rights, and social justice. However, the inclusion of men in these organizations can further strengthen their mission by promoting a more inclusive approach to gender equality. Encouraging male membership can help address gender bias and foster a collaborative environment for achieving mutual goals.

### ▣ Reasons to Encourage Male Membership

#### ▣ Promoting Gender Inclusivity:

- ▶ **Shared Responsibility:** Gender equality is not solely a women's issue; it is a societal issue. Including men emphasizes that both genders must work together to address and solve gender-based issues.
- ▶ **Broader Perspectives:** Male membership can bring diverse viewpoints and experiences, enriching the dialogue and strategies for addressing gender bias.

#### ▣ Challenging Stereotypes and Biases:

- ▶ **Breaking Stereotypes:** Involving men in women's organizations can challenge and change traditional gender roles and stereotypes, showing that men are equally invested in achieving gender equality.
- ▶ **Bias Reduction:** Collaborative efforts can help dismantle unconscious biases that both men and women may hold, fostering a more egalitarian approach to problem-solving.

#### ▣ Enhancing Advocacy and Influence:

- ▶ **Increased Influence:** Men often hold significant positions of power in various sectors. Their involvement in women's organizations can amplify advocacy efforts and influence policy changes.
- ▶ **Support from Allies:** Male allies can use their platforms to advocate for women's rights, bringing greater attention and resources to the cause.

### ■ Building Solidarity and Understanding:

- ▶ **Mutual Understanding:** Joint participation in gender equality initiatives can build empathy and understanding between genders, leading to more effective and harmonious teamwork.
- ▶ **Unified Goals:** Working together can help align goals and create a unified front against gender discrimination, benefiting the entire society.

### ■ Strategies for Effective Inclusion

- **Balanced Representation:** Establish clear guidelines to ensure balanced representation and participation of both genders in leadership and decision-making roles.
- **Education and Training:** Provide gender sensitivity training for all members to promote understanding and respect for different perspectives and experiences.
- **Inclusive Policies:** Develop and implement policies that promote inclusivity and prevent gender-based domination within the organization.

### ■ Interview Questions

- Q:1. Why is it important to encourage male membership in women's organizations?
- Q:2. How can male membership help challenge traditional gender stereotypes and biases?
- Q:3. What potential risk comes with involving men in women's organizations, as highlighted in the context?
- Q:4. What strategies can be employed to ensure that male membership does not overshadow the focus on women's issues?
- Q:5. How can male allies contribute to the advocacy efforts for gender equality?

## 15 Gender Digital Divide in India

### ■ Context:

The "India Inequality Report 2022: Digital Divide" reveals significant gender disparities in internet usage.

### ■ Digital gap:

- Women make up only one-third of internet users in India, are 15% less likely to own a mobile phone, and 33% less likely to use mobile internet services compared to men.
- India has the widest gender gap in mobile phone ownership in the Asia-Pacific region at 40.4%. Rural-urban disparities are stark, with 31% of the rural population using the internet versus 67% in urban areas.
- State-wise, Maharashtra has the highest internet penetration, while Bihar has the lowest.
- Digital access also varies by religion and caste, with Sikhs and general/OBC groups having higher access than Muslims and SC/ST populations.

### ■ Impact:

- The digital divide exacerbates existing inequalities based on caste, religion, gender, class, and location, as reflected in India's rank of 105 out of 193 countries in the UN's e-participation index.
- **Equal access to mobile devices** is crucial for modern civic participation, integrated e-service delivery, and accessing financial entitlements, especially post-COVID-19.



- **Patriarchal norms and societal barriers** limit women's mobile phone use, compounded by issues like dependency on men for phone ownership, poorer phone functionality, limited digital skills, and social norms restricting phone use.
- **Initiatives** like **Wireless Women for Entrepreneurship and Empowerment (W2E2)**, **Internet Saathi**, and the **National e-Governance Plan** aim to empower women digitally.
- **Suggestive Measures:** Ensuring universal internet access, conducting digital literacy camps, establishing grievance redressal mechanisms, and addressing income inequality through improved wages and access to health and education services.


**FACT BOX**
**India Inequality Report 2022: Digital Divide**

Recently, Oxfam India released the "India Inequality Report 2022: Digital Divide."

- **Data Source:** The report uses data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's (CMIE) household survey from January 2018 to December 2021.
- **Internet Use Among Indian Women:**
  - ▶ Women in India are 15% less likely to own a mobile phone and 33% less likely to use mobile internet services than men.
  - ▶ Women make up only one-third of internet users in India.
  - ▶ India has the largest gender gap in mobile and internet use in the Asia-Pacific region at 40.4%.
- **Rural-Urban Digital Divide:** Only 31% of the rural population uses the Internet, compared to 67% in urban areas, despite a 13% annual growth in digital usage.

**Interview Questions**

- Q:1. What is the gender gap in mobile phone ownership and internet usage in India, according to the India Inequality Report 2022?**
- Q:2. How do rural-urban disparities in digital access in India manifest, according to the report?**
- Q:3. What are some of the social and cultural barriers contributing to the digital divide for women in India?**
- Q:4. Which initiatives have been introduced to bridge the digital divide and empower women in India?**
- Q:5. What are some suggested measures to address the digital gender gap and improve digital access in India?**

## 16 Menstrual Hygiene in Indian Prisons

**Context**

In 2023, India made significant progress by drafting the '**National Menstrual Hygiene Policy**,' recognizing menstruation as a natural process that requires serious attention. The policy identifies **prisoners as a key group with limited access to menstrual hygiene facilities**, marking a positive step. However, it lacks a concrete action plan to improve menstrual hygiene management in prisons and fails to involve the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, a crucial stakeholder in prison **management**.

- **Need to ensure menstrual hygiene in prisons:** Ensuring menstrual hygiene in prisons is not just a matter of public health; it is also a societal issue reflecting on the broader aspects of **equity, dignity, and human rights**.
  - **Gender Equality and Human Rights:** Access to menstrual hygiene is a fundamental human right. Denying this access in prisons **perpetuates gender inequality** and violates the **dignity of incarcerated women**.
  - **Health and Well-being:** Poor menstrual hygiene can lead to various health issues, including infections and mental health problems.
  - **Reducing Stigma:** Addressing menstrual hygiene openly helps in reducing the stigma associated with menstruation. It promotes a more inclusive and understanding society where natural biological processes are recognized and respected.
- **Issues/Challenges**
  - Lack of **availability of sanitary napkins**, unsatisfactory **quality of sanitary napkins**
  - **Many States have not implemented provisions** (supplying adequate water and washroom facilities for female prisoners).
  - **Overcrowding and poor socio-economic conditions** further exacerbate the struggle of incarcerated women to secure basic necessities (water, sanitary napkins, detergent, and soap).
- **Required Measures**
  - **Adherence to Standards:** The government must ensure **basic menstrual hygiene standards** for women in prisons. The uneven implementation of the **Model Prison Manual 2016** across states needs immediate attention.
  - **Collaboration:** Health authorities and prison administrators should work together to develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure access to adequate menstrual hygiene facilities.

### Government Initiatives Related to Menstrual Hygiene

- **National Menstrual Hygiene Policy (2023):** Emphasizes safe and dignified MHM for all, including prisoners, but lacks a specific action plan for prisons.
- **Menstrual Hygiene Scheme (MHS):** Promotes menstrual hygiene among rural adolescent girls aged 10–19 through subsidized sanitary napkin packs.
- **Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP):** Provides oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins at Jan Aushadhi Kendras for Rs 1 each.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) (Mission Shakti):** Raises awareness about menstrual hygiene and the use of sanitary napkins.
- **Samagra Shiksha:** Includes state-specific projects for menstrual health and hygiene, such as installing sanitary pad vending machines and incinerators in schools.
- **Zero-Napkin Mission:** In Kerala, promotes menstrual cups over synthetic napkins due to environmental and health concerns.

### Interview Questions

- Q:1. What is the significance of the 'National Menstrual Hygiene Policy' of 2023 in relation to prisoners in India?
- Q:2. What are the main challenges faced by incarcerated women in India regarding menstrual hygiene?
- Q:3. How does the lack of proper menstrual hygiene facilities in prisons affect the health and dignity of incarcerated women?

- Q:4. What are some government initiatives in India aimed at improving menstrual hygiene for women, including those in rural areas?
- Q:5. What measures should the government take to ensure menstrual hygiene in Indian prisons?

## 17 Women MPs in Lok Sabha

### ▣ Context:

In the 18th Lok Sabha, 74 women have been elected as Members of Parliament (MPs), a slight reduction from the 78 women elected in 2019.

### ▣ Status of Women in Legislatures:

- **Representation Percentage:** Women constitute 13.6% of the new Lok Sabha, down from 14.3% previously.
- **Global Comparison:** India's representation of women in the Lok Sabha (13.63%) lags behind countries like South Africa, the UK, and the US.
- **Party Representation:** In the 2024 elections, women MPs were elected from 14 parties, with BJP leading with 31 MPs, followed by Congress with 13 and TMC with 11.
- **Demographics:** Among the 74 women MPs, 43 are first-time MPs, with an average age of 50 years. Approximately 10% of candidates in 2024 were women, showing a modest increase.
- **Global Perspective:** India's women representation in legislatures remains relatively low compared to countries like Rwanda and Cuba.

### ▣ Reasons for Low Women Representation:

- **Gender Conditioning:** Factors include lack of encouragement, self-doubt, reluctance to compete, fear of politics' demands, and family responsibilities.
- **Patriarchal Society:** Gender disparities, cultural expectations, and literacy barriers hinder women's political participation.
- **Gatekeepers:** Bias in candidate selection by party leaders favors male candidates, impacting women's electoral prospects.
- **Political Environment:** Challenges such as campaign costs, criminalization, corruption, and gender-based harassment deter women from entering politics.
- **Structural Disadvantages:** Issues like hate speech and misuse of power disproportionately affect women candidates.

### ▣ Benefits of High Representation of Women in Legislature:

- **Focus on Gender Issues:** Ensures stronger attention and implementation of policies addressing women's concerns.
- **Gender Equality:** Crucial for inclusive democracy and advancing women's interests in governance.
- **Accountability:** Direct representation fosters better accountability towards women constituents.
- **Gender-Sensitive Governance:** Promotes reforms to achieve gender parity in public policies.
- **Inclusive Initiatives:** Supports initiatives and subsidies enhancing women's decision-making roles.
- **Challenging Stereotypes:** Collaboration with media to portray women as effective leaders in politics, challenging societal stereotypes.


**FACT BOX**
**Steps Taken for Increasing Women's Political Representation:**

- **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023:** Proposes one-third reservation of seats in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies for women.
- **Constitutional Amendments:** Reservations in Panchayats and Municipalities under the 73rd and 74th Amendments.
- **SDG Target 5.5:** India's commitment to achieve women's full participation in political decision-making.
- **Constitutional Measures:** Articles ensuring equality and reservations in Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- **Legislative Initiatives:** Establishment of parliamentary committees and gender-neutral rules in the Lok Sabha.
- **International Commitments:** Aligning with global frameworks like CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action.

**Interview Questions**

- Q:1.** What is the percentage of women representation in the 18th Lok Sabha, and how does it compare to previous years?
- Q:2.** What are the main reasons for the low representation of women in India's legislature?
- Q:3.** What are some of the benefits of increasing women's representation in the Lok Sabha?
- Q:4.** What initiatives have been taken to enhance women's political representation in India, such as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023?
- Q:5.** How does India's representation of women in the Lok Sabha compare globally, particularly with countries like Rwanda and South Africa?

## 18 Marital Rape: An Indignity to Women

**Context:**

The **Marital Rape Exception (MRE)**, as outlined in the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023**, continues to be contested in the Supreme Court of India. The Centre has filed an affidavit supporting the MRE, which has sparked significant legal and social debate regarding its implications for women's rights and the institution of marriage.

**Expectation of Sexual Access**

- **Legal Ambiguity:** The Centre argues that marriage creates an 'expectation of reasonable sexual access,' but fails to define what constitutes this expectation, raising concerns about its vagueness as a legal standard.
- **Subjective vs. Objective:** The distinction between subjective (individual perception) and objective (uniform standard) definitions of this expectation remains unclear, complicating its legal applicability.
- **Gender Norms:** The assertion that marriage creates specific expectations ignores that other intimate relationships, like live-in arrangements, can also foster similar expectations, questioning the rationale behind differential treatment.

## ▣ Sanctity of Marriage

- **Institutional Integrity:** The Centre claims that recognizing marital rape could undermine the institution of marriage. However, no evidence links the strength of marriage to the impunity of husbands who commit marital rape.
- **Misuse Concerns:** The argument concerning potential misuse of marital rape allegations is misleading, as all criminal offenses can be misused; thus, proving guilt or innocence is a judicial responsibility.
- **Reform Necessity:** If marital impunity is essential for marriage, it raises questions about the institution's value and necessitates reevaluation and potential reform rather than protection under law.

## ▣ Jurisdictional Arguments

- **Social vs. Legal Issues:** The Centre contends that marital rape is a social issue beyond judicial jurisdiction. However, law governs all aspects of life, making it challenging to separate social from legal concerns.
- **Legislative Competence:** While the Centre argues that defining criminal offenses lies within legislative power, the Court's role is to assess whether existing laws, like the MRE, violate fundamental rights under the Constitution.
- **Constitutionality Assessment:** The Supreme Court's task is to evaluate the constitutionality of MRE, focusing on its alignment with Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution, rather than debating the necessity of criminalizing marital rape.

## ▣ Interview Questions

- Q:1. What are the concerns regarding the legal ambiguity of the 'expectation of reasonable sexual access' in marriage, as mentioned in the MRE?
- Q:2. What role does the Supreme Court play in evaluating the constitutionality of the Marital Rape Exception, according to the Centre's stance?
- Q:3. Why does the Centre argue that marital rape is more of a social issue than a legal one, and how does this position affect the broader legal debate on the matter?

# 19 West Bengal's New Law for Death Penalty in Rape Cases

## ▣ Context:

In response to the tragic rape-murder of a woman medic at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, the West Bengal Assembly has passed the **Aparajita Woman and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2024**. This bill aims to enhance legal measures for protecting women and children by proposing significant amendments to existing criminal laws.

## ▣ Key Provisions:

- **Capital Punishment:** The bill proposes the death penalty for individuals convicted of rape if their actions result in the victim's death or a vegetative state. For gang rape and rape, it mandates a life sentence lasting for the convict's natural life.
- **Medical Expenses:** The bill stipulates that the special rape court will determine the victim's medical expenses, which will be borne by the convict or their family. Failure to pay can result in recovery through legal means.
- **Time-bound Investigations:** The bill mandates that investigations into rape cases must be completed within 21 days from the initial report, a reduction from the previous two-month deadline.



- **Penalties for Repeat Offenders:** Repeat offenders would receive a life sentence, meaning they would be imprisoned for the remainder of their natural life.
  - **Publication Restrictions:** The bill penalizes the unauthorized printing or publishing of matters related to court proceedings with imprisonment of three to five years and a fine.
- **Justice Verma Committee strongly opposed the capital punishment.**

### Punishment for rape across the globe

- **Egypt**– The rapist is hanged till death
- **Israel**– Rape convict gets 4 years minimum and 16 years maximum imprisonment
- **United Arab Emirates**– Death
- **China**– Death Penalty is awarded to Rapist
- **Afghanistan**– The rapist is hanged to Death or shot dead by a bullet in the head
- **France**– 10 years of imprisonment, but if victim dies, punishment is increased to 30 years
- **USA**– Maximum punishment granted in 30 years in jail
- **Greece**– Rapist is punished with incarceration
- **Iran**– Death Penalty is granted to rapist
- **North Korea**– The offender is either shot in his head or vital organs by a firing squad

Positive Side	Negative Side
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Death penalty may act as a <b>strong deterrent against rape and sexual violence</b> by imposing severe consequences, potentially discouraging offenders from committing such heinous acts.</li> <li>◦ For some, the death penalty provides a <b>sense of justice and closure for victims</b> and their families, especially in cases where the crime is exceptionally brutal or leads to death or severe trauma.</li> <li>◦ Executing convicted rapists ensures that they cannot commit further crimes, thereby <b>protecting society from potentially dangerous individuals</b> who might reoffend if given a life sentence.</li> <li>◦ It sends a strong message that <b>sexual violence is intolerable</b> and will be met with the harshest penalties, reflecting a commitment to protecting vulnerable populations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Death penalty could also <b>compel the accused to attempt to murder the victim</b> to prevent her from giving a testimony and avoiding detection.</li> <li>◦ Death penalties may cause a <b>lower rate of conviction</b> and put more pressure on the victim not to report the assault.</li> <li>◦ It would also lead to an <b>increased emphasis on corroborative evidence</b> and a more rigorous and traumatic examination process.</li> <li>◦ The death penalty conflicts with the <b>right to life, a fundamental human right</b>.</li> <li>◦ Capital punishment cases often involve <b>lengthy and complex appeal processes</b>, which can delay justice for victims and strain judicial resources.</li> <li>◦ Research on the death penalty's effectiveness as a <b>deterrent is mixed</b>.</li> </ul>

### ■ Interview Questions

- Q:1. How does the West Bengal bill address the financial responsibility of convicts in rape cases?
- Q:2. What is the stance of the Justice Verma Committee on the death penalty for rape, and how does it contrast with the proposed bill?
- Q:3. What are some of the potential benefits of implementing the death penalty in rape cases, as proposed in the new law?
- Q:4. What are the negative implications of the death penalty for rape, particularly in terms of the judicial process and victim impact?

## 20. Impact of India's New Legal Framework on Women's Rights and Agency

### ▢ Context:

Recently, India has witnessed significant legal reforms with the introduction of three new laws – Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Act – replacing the Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, and Evidence Act respectively. These changes have sparked varied reactions nationwide, particularly concerning their implications for women's rights and autonomy.

### ▢ State-Level Reforms: Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code:

- Uttarakhand implemented a Uniform Civil Code after Goa, aiming to standardize personal laws across religions. This includes a provision for registering live-in relationships, overseen by a state-appointed registrar.
  - Despite protections under existing laws like the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**, concerns arise regarding the state's oversight in intimate matters.
  - The code mandates informing parents if either partner in a live-in relationship is under 21, irrespective of the legal marriage age being 18 for girls. This raises questions about young women's autonomy and the state's role in private relationships.

### ▢ Central-Level Legislative Changes: Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita 2023

- **Marital Rape Exception and Women's Bodily Autonomy:** The new law reaffirms the exception of marital rape, maintaining that sexual acts by a husband with his wife, above 18 years, are not considered rape. This stance is concerning in light of statistics revealing high instances of sexual violence against married women. Critics argue this perpetuates control over women's bodies in the name of preserving marital sanctity.
- **Impact on Trans Persons:** Moreover, the law removes earlier protections against sexual violence for trans persons, impacting their safety and legal rights.
- **Self-Managed Abortions and Legal Risks:** Under the new legal framework, self-managed abortions are equated with criminal abortion, punishable by law. The **Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021** offers limited exceptions, subject to stringent conditions like gestational limits and medical board approvals. This restrictive approach poses challenges to women's reproductive autonomy and access to safe abortion.

### ▢ Public vs. Private: State Regulation and Women's Agency

- **Control Over Intimate Decisions:** State intervention in private matters such as marriage, relationships, and reproductive choices raises concerns about infringement on personal autonomy. Issues like marital rape and restrictions on abortion highlight how legal frameworks can disproportionately impact women, often prioritizing societal norms over individual rights.
- **Gendered Power Dynamics:** The interplay between public policy and private autonomy underscores the gendered power dynamics within families and society. Privacy, when upheld as a tool for women's rights, can safeguard dignity and autonomy. However, conflicting societal structures can undermine these rights, necessitating a delicate balance between regulation and respecting agency.

### ▢ Interview Questions

- Q:1. What key concern does Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code raise regarding women's autonomy in live-in relationships?
- Q:2. How does the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, impact women's bodily autonomy, particularly in relation to marital rape?

- Q:3. What are the implications of the new legal framework on self-managed abortions and women's reproductive rights in India?
- Q:4. How does the new law regarding marital rape and sexual violence protections for trans persons affect gender equality in India?
- Q:5. What challenges arise from state intervention in personal matters like marriage, relationships, and reproductive choices in the context of women's agency?

## Population & Associated Issues

### 21 Cities growing upward than outward

#### ▣ Context

A recent study published in *Nature Cities* highlights a **significant trend in urban growth worldwide**, with cities increasingly **expanding vertically rather than horizontally**. This shift is particularly notable in Asia, where **rapid urbanization and high population** densities necessitate taller buildings to accommodate growing populations.

#### ▣ Issues highlighted in the Study

- **Infrastructural Strain:** As cities grow upwards, existing infrastructure—such as **roads, sewage systems, and public transport**—may struggle to keep pace with the increased demands. This can lead to inefficiencies and overburdened services.
- **Environmental Impact:** Increased vertical growth can exacerbate **urban heat island effects**, where the concentration of buildings and **reduced green spaces** lead to higher temperatures and altered local climates. Taller buildings may also contribute to **higher energy consumption** and **greater carbon footprints**.
- **Planning and Regulation Challenges:** Urban areas with stringent building regulations, such as those seen in parts of India, face difficulties in accommodating vertical growth. In some cases, regulatory frameworks and master plans are outdated, failing to address the complexities of modern urban development effectively.

#### ▣ Reason Behind the Trend:

- The primary driver of vertical growth is the necessity to accommodate a rapidly increasing urban population within limited spatial boundaries.
- As cities reach the limits of horizontal expansion, building upwards becomes a practical solution.
- This vertical growth trend is particularly pronounced in densely populated cities across East Asia, where high population densities and economic factors push for taller structures.

#### ▣ Impact:

- **Urban Density:** Vertical growth increases population density within urban areas, potentially improving land use efficiency and making it possible to house more people within a smaller footprint.
- **Economic Considerations:** Tall buildings can enhance property values and contribute to economic growth by providing more commercial and residential space in prime locations. However, they also require substantial investment in specialized construction and maintenance.

- **Climate Resilience:** The increased density and reduced green space associated with vertical growth can impact local climate conditions and increase vulnerability to heat-related issues. Urban planning must incorporate climate resilience strategies to mitigate these effects.
- **Public Services:** The demand for enhanced public services, including transportation and utilities, grows with vertical expansion. Effective urban planning and infrastructure development are crucial to ensuring that these services can meet the needs of a growing population.

#### ■ **Positive Impacts:**

- Rapid urbanisation is crucial for **harnessing the demographic dividend** of a young population. With 12 million more people joining the country's labour force every year, the potential of that dividend is huge. As the urbanisation process continues, connectivity, proximity, and diversity will accelerate knowledge diffusion, spark further innovation, and enhance productivity and employment growth.



#### **FACT BOX**

##### **Urbanisation in India (United Nations-Habitat's World Cities Report 2022)**

- India's urban population is estimated to stand at 675 million in 2035, the second highest behind China's one billion.
- India's urban population is projected to be 67,54,56,000 in 2035, growing from 48,30,99,000 in 2020 to 54,27,43,000 in 2025 and 60,73,42,000 in 2030.
- By 2035, the percentage of population in India at mid-year residing in urban area will be 43.2%.
  - ▶ **Government Initiatives**
  - ▶ Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)
  - ▶ Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)
  - ▶ Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban)
  - ▶ Smart Cities Mission
  - ▶ Pradhan Mantri-eBus Sewa Scheme
  - ▶ National Urban Digital Mission
  - ▶ Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana or National Urban Livelihood Mission
  - ▶ City Investment to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain 2.0

#### ■ **Interview Question**

- Q:1. How does vertical urban growth address the challenges posed by rapid urbanization in densely populated cities?**
- Q:2. What are the potential environmental impacts of vertical growth, and how can urban planning mitigate these effects?**
- Q:3. How can India balance the need for vertical growth with the demand for sustainable infrastructure and climate resilience?**

## **22 Rising Infertility in India**

#### ■ **Context:**

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, the incidence of infertility in eligible couples is approximately 14 per cent-16 percent.

### ▣ What is Total Fertility rate?

- Total fertility rate (TFR) in simple terms refers to the total number of children born or likely to be born to a woman in her lifetime if she were subject to the prevailing rate of age-specific fertility in the population.
- TFR of about 2.1 children per woman is called Replacement-level fertility. TFR lower than 2.1 children per woman — indicates that a generation is not producing enough children to replace itself, eventually leading to an outright reduction in population.
- **Health Issues Overburdening in India:** As per the National Health Policy, 2017, public investment in health is expected to reach 2.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2025.
  - ▶ As per latest economic survey 2023–24, the Government Health Expenditure (GHE) for the last three years i.e. 2021–22, 2022–23 (RE) and 2023–24 (BE) is 1.9 per cent of GDP.
  - ▶ The government told the House that the Department of Health and Family Welfare (DoHFW) has made efforts to increase allocation in the health budget.

### ▣ Reasons for rising Infertility:

- **Climatic changes** may also spur shifts in fertility by decreasing children's health and survival, which may lead women to have additional children in anticipation of increased mortality risks ("insurance effects") or in response to an actual child death.
- **Rise in use of Intoxicants:** Fertility is affected by unhealthy coping mechanisms such as tobacco and alcohol overuse.
- **Contraceptives:** Also, there has been a significant increase in current use of any modern contraceptive method. Contraceptive Prevalence Rate has increased substantially from 54% to 67% at the all-India level.
- **Reversible Spacing:** Introduction of new reversible spacing (gaps between children) methods, wage compensation systems to undergo sterilisation, and the promotion of small family norms also worked well over the years.

### ▣ Interview Questions

- Q:1. What are the primary reasons for the rising infertility rates in India, and how can they be addressed?**
- Q:2. What are the implications of a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) lower than 2.1 in urban India, and how should policy respond?**
- Q:3. In what ways can India improve its healthcare infrastructure to better manage the increasing incidence of infertility?**

## 23 The rise of the Indian middle class

### ▣ Context:

India's middle class is expanding rapidly, driving economic and political change. The number of registered car users has increased dramatically in India, reaching an estimated 40 million, suggesting a middle class of around 400–500 million people. This demographic is the fastest-growing segment of the population, and it has outpaced the growth rate of the global middle class.

### ▣ Features of India's middle class:

- It is the youngest globally, which typically translates to greater dynamism economically and politically compared to counterparts in China and the United States.



- It is also a driving force behind the rising domestic market, with growth in the purchase of homes, cars, refrigerators, motorcycles, and digital goods and services.

#### ▣ **Responsible factors:**

- **Service Sector:** India's IT outsourcing industry is still considered one of the largest exporters of IT and business process outsourcing services.
- India's growth pattern in the 21st century is remarkable because it contradicts a seemingly iron law of development that has held true for almost two centuries since the start of the Industrial Revolution.
- **Technological advancements** in Internet access, cloud computing, and state-of-the-art data centres have significantly contributed to propelling India's middle class into prominence in the global technology landscape.
- **India will continue to have a thriving startup ecosystem** that ranks third globally. India's ranking in the **Global Innovation Index** has also surged from 81 to an impressive 40th position during the last decade.

#### ▣ **Interview Questions**

- Q:1. How do you define inclusive growth, and how does the middle class contribute to it in India?
- Q:2. What role does technology play in the expansion of India's middle class?
- Q:3. What are the key challenges faced by India's growing middle class?
- Q:4. How does the rise of the middle class influence India's political landscape?
- Q:5. Do you think the government is doing enough to address the aspirations of the expanding middle class?

## **24 Deaths by Suicide in India**

#### ▣ **Context:**

Rajasthan's Kota, India's coaching capital, is grappling with a surge in student suicides, driven by the immense pressure to excel in professional entrance exams. According to the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), in 2020, a student took their own life every 42 minutes; that is, every day, more than 34 students died by suicide.

Suicides among young people continue to be a serious problem.

#### ▣ **How is Suicide a Social Problem?**

- The problem with only viewing suicide as an individual problem is that we neglect the importance of social forces contributing to suicide.
- Suicide is a serious social problem whose incidence varies between genders, age groups, geographical distribution, and with the influence of the socio-political structure of society.
- The risk of suicide in a population increases when the social context fails to provide a healthy sense of purpose and belonging, contributing to an individual's sense of contribution and connection.
- Furthermore, suicide should be viewed as a multidimensional public and mental health issue, having complex interactions with the economic, social, cultural, psychological, and biological realms of individual and collective existence.

#### ▣ **What are the challenges?**

- **Under-reporting of such cases** due to fear of social stigma and sometimes to rescue from judicial procedures.

- Fear of legal action: Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) makes suicide a punishable offense. The fear of punitive action and added hassle of having to deal with police and courts often results in a refusal to seek help.
- Social stigma: The social stigma associated with suicide results in the NCRB grossly under-reporting the true numbers of suicide.

#### ▢ Related Initiatives:

- **Mental Healthcare Act, 2017:** It aims to provide mental healthcare services for persons with mental illness.
- **KIRAN:** The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched a 24/7 toll-free helpline to provide support to people facing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts, and other mental health concerns.
- **Manodarpan Initiative:** It is an initiative of the Ministry of Education under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. It is aimed to provide psychosocial support to students, family members, and teachers for their mental health and well-being during the times of Covid-19.

#### ▢ Interview Questions

- Q:1. How do you think social stigma surrounding suicide can be reduced in India?**
- Q:2. What role does the educational system play in contributing to student suicides, particularly in coaching hubs like Kota?**
- Q:3. How effective do you think the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, is in addressing the issue of suicide in India?**
- Q:4. What measures can be taken to address the under-reporting of suicide cases in India?**
- Q:5. How can India balance legal and mental health aspects when dealing with suicide prevention?**

## 25 Population Crisis in Asian Nations:

#### ▢ Context:

Many countries in East and Southeast Asia are in the midst of a population crisis, with fewer births every year and record-low fertility rates.

#### ▢ Declining Fertility Rates in Asian Nations:

- **Population Crisis:** East and Southeast Asian countries facing severe decline in birth rates and fertility rates.
- **Historical Context:** Shift from higher fertility rates in mid-20th century to current record lows.
- **Current Situation:** Countries like South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan experiencing fertility rates below replacement level, leading to cessation of newborn delivery services in some Chinese hospitals.

#### ▢ Factors Contributing to Declining Fertility:

- **Changing Societal Trends:** Couples choosing to remain childless, increasing number of individuals staying single, and rising costs of raising children.
- **Policy Impact:** Historical family planning measures influencing societal norms and fertility rates.

- **Economic Considerations:** Opportunities for women in workforce, declining marriage rates, and financial burden of raising children.

#### ▣ **Implications of Declining Fertility Rates:**

- **Population Imbalance:** Aging population leading to demographic imbalance.
- **Socio-economic Challenges:** Increased dependency ratios, strains on healthcare and pension systems.
- **Financial Burden:** Governments implementing costly programs to encourage childbirth, effectiveness uncertain.
- **Addressing the Population Crisis:** Prioritize investments in childcare facilities, parental leave policies, and financial assistance programs. Create environments supporting work-life balance, flexible employment, and gender equality.
- **Case Studies:**
  - **South Korea:** Faces challenges such as gender inequality, high child-rearing costs, and societal pressures, highlighting trade-offs between career and family.
  - **Singapore:** Financial costs, pandemic disruptions, and work-life balance issues contribute to declining birth rates.

#### ▣ **Interview Questions**

- Q:1. What do you think are the main socio-economic factors contributing to the declining fertility rates in East and Southeast Asian countries?
- Q:2. How can Asian nations like South Korea and Singapore effectively address the challenges posed by an aging population?
- Q:3. Do you believe government incentives to encourage childbirth in countries facing a population crisis are effective in the long term? Why or why not?
- Q:4. How can policies supporting gender equality help address the declining birth rates in countries like South Korea and Singapore?
- Q:5. What role does work-life balance and affordable childcare play in encouraging higher fertility rates in countries with low birth rates?

## 26 **Manual Scavenging, India's "dirtiest job"**

#### ▣ **Context:**

Manual scavenging, the practice of manually cleaning, carrying, and disposing of human excreta, continues to persist in India despite legislative measures aimed at eradicating it. This practice is deeply intertwined with social, economic, and caste-based complexities.

- **Persistence:** At present, as per official figures, 58,098 "eligible manual scavengers" across the country, who manually clean sewers and septic tanks and handle human excreta.
- **Who's engaged?** Predominantly Dalits, who face social exclusion and violence across the country owing to their caste identity. There is a **close relationship between the caste system and manual scavenging**, where the social hierarchies of the **varna dharma** are to be kept intact as per the cultural practises endorsed by civil society and the state.

#### ▣ **Challenges and Associated Issues**

- **Degrading Dignity:** Manual scavenging strips individuals of their dignity and exposes them to health hazards, humiliation, and societal exclusion.

- **Social Stigma:** The association of manual scavenging with specific castes perpetuates social stigma, hindering upward mobility and reinforcing discrimination.
- **Lack of Awareness** resulting in limited advocacy for change.

### ■ Reasons for Persistence

- Although legally abolished, the practice persists due to implementation loopholes and inadequate enforcement.
- **Caste-based discrimination** continues to marginalize certain communities, limiting their access to education, employment, and social mobility.
- **Generational occupation and societal conditioning** normalize manual scavenging within certain communities.
- Comprehensive policy implementation, backed by political will, is often lacking, perpetuating systemic injustices.

### ■ Government Interventions:

- The practice was banned through the **Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993**. In 2013, the government enacted a stronger law, the **Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act**.
- Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan (Clean India initiative), Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge

### ■ Who is to be blamed?

- Poor governance
- Unequal social structure based on caste hierarchy and patriarchy
- The rich segment who have been so engulfed in their own lives that they do not care about the issue or question the government and ensure accountability.

### ■ The Way Forward

- Ensure strict enforcement of existing laws.
- Provide alternative livelihood opportunities and economic empowerment for affected communities.
- Combat caste-based discrimination through robust social and educational initiatives.
- Raise public awareness to foster a collective resolve against manual scavenging.
- The eradication of manual scavenging requires a multi-faceted approach, combining stringent law enforcement, economic empowerment, eradication of caste-based discrimination, and heightened public awareness to address this deeply entrenched social evil.

### ■ Interview Questions

- Q:1. Despite legal measures, why does manual scavenging continue to persist in India?**
- Q:2. How does the caste system contribute to the perpetuation of manual scavenging in India?**
- Q:3. What role does social stigma play in the marginalization of manual scavengers, and how can it be addressed?**
- Q:4. In your opinion, what are the key challenges in enforcing laws aimed at eradicating manual scavenging?**
- Q:5. How can alternative livelihood opportunities help in eradicating manual scavenging and promoting social mobility for affected communities?**

## SECULARISM

### 27 Education and Secularism

#### ▣ Context:

In a significant ruling, the Allahabad High Court has struck down the **Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004 (Madarsa Act, 2004)** enacted by the state government.

#### ▣ Key-points highlighted by the High Court

- The Act found to be a violation of secularism. Any portion of the Act is of any relevance and maintained.
- The state has no power to create a board for religious education or to establish board for school education only for a particular religion and philosophy associated with it.
- It was the duty of the state to provide education, which is secular in nature, more particularly for minors.
- It cannot discriminate and provide different types of education to children belonging to different religions. Any such action would be **violative of secularism**.

#### ▣ Secularism and Education in India:

- Secularism is part of the basic structure of the Constitution.
- The value of Secularism is deeply ingrained all through, and particularly in Articles 14, 19, 22, and 25.
- Education, being a fundamental right under Article 21-A of the Constitution, holds immense significance in fostering a democratic society and promoting social cohesion.
- It entails offering a curriculum that is inclusive of diverse perspectives, cultures, and beliefs, fostering a spirit of tolerance, pluralism, and respect for individual autonomy.

- ▣ **Impact of Denial:** Denying certain groups access to quality education based on religious grounds not only perpetuates social inequality but also undermines the foundational principles of democracy and secularism.

#### ▣ Interview Questions

- Q:1. How does the Allahabad High Court ruling on the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004 relate to the principle of secularism in India?
- Q:2. What role does secularism play in shaping India's education system, and why is it critical for fostering social cohesion?
- Q:3. Do you think religious education should be part of the formal education system? Why or why not?
- Q:4. How does Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution contribute to the concept of secular education in India?
- Q:5. What are the potential consequences of providing different types of education to children based on their religion in a secular state like India?



## 28 A Prison mapped by Caste

### Context:

The Centre has asked states and Union Territories not to segregate prisoners on the basis of their caste and religion and to stop assigning duties like managing prison kitchens according to the discriminatory approach.

### How caste is an “endless battle” in Indian society?

- Discrimination and violence against Dalits are common with the caste hierarchy condemning them to the bottom of the social ladder.
- Despite laws to protect the Scheduled Castes (SC), abuse is frequently reported from across the country.
  - ▶ In Andhra Pradesh alone, 2,014 crimes against SCs were recorded in 2021, of which 33 were murders and 49 were cases of rape of minor girls.
- Shunned by many in society who call them ‘**untouchable**’, Dalits, particularly in villages, are discriminated against, denied access to land, forced to work in degrading conditions like in scavenging, and routinely abused, even killed, sometimes at the hands of the police and at times by people of upper castes.
- This entrenched form of societal segregation, often described as hidden apartheid, has led to the complete isolation of many villages along caste lines.
- The prevalence of caste-based violence in Indian society is a complex issue rooted in historical, social, and economic factors.

### The in-discriminatory approach and required measures

- The jail manuals of some states provide for segregation of prisoners based on their caste and religion and they are being assigned duties in the prisons accordingly.
  - ▶ **Composition:** Two-third of prisoners in Indian jails are Dalits, tribals and from Other Backward Classes (OBCs), 19% are Muslims and 66% of 4.66 lakh inmates are either illiterate or have not studied beyond Class X
  - ▶ **Worse for women:** Unlike the male prisoners, women are fewer in number and so are the provisions made available to them.
- **Upholding Constitutional Principles:** There is constitutional imperative to ensure equality and non-discrimination within prison facilities.
- **Compliance with Model Prison Manual:** The Model Prison Manual, 2016 serves as a guiding framework for prison administration, explicitly prohibiting any form of caste or religion-based discrimination. States and Union Territories are urged to act as per these guidelines.

### When the rules themselves are casteist?

- Caste-based labour, in fact, is sanctioned in the prison manuals of many states.
- The colonial texts of the late 19th century have barely seen any amendments, and caste-based labour remains an untouched part of these manuals.
- While every state has its own unique prison manual, they are mostly based on The Prisons Act, 1894.
- These jail manuals mention every activity in detail – from the measurement of food and space per prisoner to punishments for the “disorderly ones”.

### Interview Questions

**Q:1. What are the implications of caste-based discrimination within Indian prisons, and how does it reflect the larger issue of caste in society?**

- Q:2. How can the constitutional principles of equality and non-discrimination be upheld in the context of prison administration?
- Q:3. What are the challenges in eliminating caste-based segregation in Indian prisons, and what reforms would be necessary?
- Q:4. Do you think the current prison system perpetuates caste-based labor? If so, what changes would you suggest to break this cycle?
- Q:5. How do historical legal frameworks like the Prisons Act of 1894 continue to influence caste-based practices in Indian prisons?

