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*C – Chennai; B – Bengaluru; T – Thiruvananthapuram; D – Delhi
1. Parliament

- Worse than 140 countries; global average - 24.6%
- % of women parliamentarians has gone up in last three terms of the Lower House
  - 15th, 16th & 17th Lok Sabha
- There is no reservation for women in Indian Parliament

2. State Legislatures

- Only 9 states had an avg. share of more than 10% women in State Legislative Assemblies between 2008 and 2018

⇒ SDG 5

- Achieve gender equality and empower ALL women and girls

  → target 5.5 → Ensure full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership AT ALL LEVELS OF DECISION MAKING in
  * political,
  * economic &
  * public life

  → target 5.c → Adopt and strengthen – Sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality & empowerment of all women and girls, at all levels
Respecting reproductive choice
Regulation of commercial surrogacy rather than a blanket ban may be the way forward.

- It is unfortunate that the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019, approved by the Cabinet, bans and criminalises commercial surrogacy and only allows altruistic surrogacy. However, in reality, a ban on all surrogacy only through a blanket ban, however, is tantamount to ostracising infertile couples and women who want children. In 2018, 2.75% of married women in India were infertile. How can they be denied the right to have a child?

- The bill fails to take into account the fact that if surrogacy was regulated and not banned, it could be a boon for infertile couples and women who want children. In reality, a ban on all surrogacy only through a blanket ban, however, is tantamount to ostracising infertile couples and women who want children. In 2018, 2.75% of married women in India were infertile. How can they be denied the right to have a child?

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Bill excludes gay couple, single men and women and unmarried couples who want to have a child

* Author → Imposing Morality

Author

* 228th Law Commission Report on Commercial Surrogacy
  → Recommended to ban Commercial Surrogacy in India
  → Prohibition in vague moral grounds without a proper assessment of social ends and purposes is irrational

* Studies on Commercial Surrogacy required
  → Sharing of reports with the public

Inventory of Commercial Surrogacy Clinics

* Health inspectors → carry out inspections
* Charter of regulations which the commercial surrogacy clinics should follow

Bills on Surrogate Mothers

→ Should be married
→ Age 25 to 35 years
→ Should have at least one child

Arguments over banning Commercial Surrogacy

→ Trafficking of children born through commercial surrogacy → forced labour → sexual exploitation
→ Abandoning of surrogate babies by foreign parents

Author's Suggestions

→ Tightening of regulations → practical solution
→ Focus on well-being of the surrogate mother
→ Intending Couple → Surrogate Mother
  → Proper financial enumeration
  → Insurance cover
  → Ensuring regular health check-ups
→ Legal documentation of some parts of surrogacy process
→ Complete ban on commercial surrogacy will lead to underground activities
→ Tightening regulations → respect women's choice about how she wants a child
Former CJ of Delhi HC → Apply Vishaka rules to judiciary and ensure accountability of judges including CJI

March, 2019 - Allegations of sexual harassment against CJI by a junior court assistant

* A 3 judge bench including CJI dismissed it

GSICC - Gender sensitization & Internal Complaints Committee

* Internal Committee in SC to look into complaints of sexual harassment

* It cannot probe allegations against judges

* Require permission of CJI to take actions

What can be done?

1. Form a permanent disciplinary committee with Secretariat at central level

2. Should be composed of retired judges – no govt. interference – independence of judiciary

Vishaka Guidelines

* SC judgement on Vishaka and others Vs. State of Rajasthan in 1997

* Gave birth to Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) Act, 2013

Act defines sexual harassment as “unwelcome acts committed directly or by implication”, namely

- Physical contacts and advances
- Demand for sexual favours
- Sexually coloured remarks
- Showing pornography
- Verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature

The woman who alleges harassment can be of any age, “whether employed or not” – covers women working or visiting workplace

Who can raise the complaint?

Either the victim or her legal heir or such a person prescribed if she is unable to make complaints due to “physical or mental incapacity or death”
Practice Question – Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013.

1. This act has been legislated based on the 1997 Vishaka guidelines.

2. It has provision for pre-inquiry mediation between the parties by the internal complaints committee.

3. The internal complaints committee has powers of a civil court.

Select the incorrect answer using the code given below

a) 1 and 2
b) 1 and 3
c) 1, 2 and 3
d) None of the above
Industry cautious on RCEP deal

Union Ministry of Commerce held meeting with Export Promotion Councils of different sectors - engineering, auto, chemical etc.

Indian Industries are worried about India joining RCEP

Export Promotion Councils (EPC)

- under Ministry of Commerce & Industries
- promote & assist Indian firms to realise their potential in International markets

30+ EPC - wool, rubber, coir, chemicals etc

RCEP:

- First promoted in 2012 by ASEAN
- 16 member Free Trade Agreement
  - 10 ASEAN Countries + India + China + Japan + S. Korea + NZ + Australia

India’s Concerns

Huge market access to China → heavy competition for Indian manufacturing sectors - steel, auto & textiles etc.

India has trade deficit with 11 RCEP countries

Will it widen further?

Unwillingness of RCEP countries to open their service market for India

Way forward

Differential market access & different tariff regime for China compared to other RCEP countries

Emphasise on ‘country of origin’ tag to prevent Chinese goods flooding Indian markets
Why India should join RCEP

1. Global challenges to multilateralism - India should not miss the chance to join
2. Indian exports - less competitive in the RCEP market if India did not join
3. Boost to Look East & Act East policies
4. RCEP - Greater market access to Indian goods & Services
5. RCEP - huge economic block
   - 30% of world trade
   - 45% of total population
   - 25% of global GDP
   → would boost India's position as a Regional Leader

Part A—Preliminary Examination
Paper I - (200 marks)
- Current events of national and international importance.

Part B—Main Examination
PAPER-IV
- Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.
- Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention.
Agent Smith

- an advanced malware
- 59% of the victims are Indians
- have affected 2.5 crore devices
- embedded in apps on Google Playstore
- becomes active after an app is downloaded, takes over other apps
- able to impersonate apps
- exploits almost all vulnerabilities in Android operating system
  - Janus vulnerability
    - hackers can modify an app without affecting the app’s signatures
    - *Janus* - Roman god of duality

Using this malware, the hackers can

- steal information from these devices
- remotely operate the apps in the devices

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Conflicting views pervade BRICS Ministers’ meeting

Part A—Preliminary Examination

Paper I—(200 marks)

- Current events of national and international importance.

Part B—Main Examination

PAPER-III

General Studies-II: Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International relations.

- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests.
- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests, Indian diaspora.
- Important International institutions, agencies and their structure, mandate.

BRICS

Brazil → BRICS in 2010

11th BRICS Summit — November 2019 in Brazil

26th July 2019 — BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs

- Brazil
  - to act on Venezuela, in support of Juan Guaido
- Russia
  - use international law as basis for solving issues by themselves without external interference
Final Statement

1. Cooperation in economy,
   Peace & Security,
   People-to-People exchanges

2. Fight against terrorism
   1. Inclusion of FATF
   2. Inclusion of “Afghan-Led, Afghan-owned”
      peace and reconciliation process
Practice Question – Prelims

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013.

1. This act has been legislated based on the 1997 Vishaka guidelines.
2. It has provision for pre-inquiry mediation between the parties by the internal complaints committee.
3. The internal complaints committee has powers of a civil court.

Select the incorrect answer using the code given below

a) 1 and 2
b) 1 and 3
c) 1, 2 and 3
d) None of the above

Practice Question – Prelims

Q2. Which of the following best describes the term, ‘Agent Smith’?

a) It is the world’s largest nuclear submarine
b) An indigenously made Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile
c) A malicious software that attacks the devices of Android Operating System
d) A agent in social media who ultimately pushes children to commit suicide

Practice Question – Prelims

Q3. Consider the following statements with reference to BRICS Grouping.

1. The BRICS grouping consists of India, Russia, China, Brazil and Sri Lanka as members.
2. The presidency of this grouping is rotated amongst its members who are permanent members of the UN Security Council.
3. The BRICS summits are usually conducted once in a year.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 3 only
b) 1 and 2 only
c) 1, 2 and 3
d) 2 and 3 only
Practice Question – Mains
GS – II

Q. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a mega regional Free Trade Agreement (FTA) which is being negotiated amongst 16 countries. India has not joined the FTA despite several years of negotiations. What are the concerns and prospects of India in joining RCEP?

Practice Questions – Prelims Answers
29th July 2019

1. Option ‘d’ – None of the above
2. Option ‘c’ – A malicious software that attacks the devices of Android Operating System
3. Option ‘a’ – 3 only