

# 15 FEBRUARY 2023 - MAINS

## QUESTIONS → DAILY QUESTIONS & MODEL ANSWERS:

**Q1. Laws without broad support typically fall short of expectations, even when they are passed for the benefit of society as a whole. Is raising the legal minimum age for marriage an appropriate measure to protect the welfare of girls? critically evaluate (250 words)**

- **Paper & Topic:** GS I → Women Empowerment
- **Model Answer:**
- **Introduction:**

The Union Cabinet decided on December 15 to raise the age at which women can legally get married from 18 to 21. Legal marriage requires males to be 21 years old. The government will equalise the marriage age for both sexes by making this decision. The recommendation to raise the legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 was made in the task team's final report, which was overseen by Jaya Jaitley.
- **Body:**
- **Background:**
  - In order to look into the connection between the average age of marriage and concerns with women's nutrition, anaemia prevalence, IMR, MMR, and other social indicators, the Ministry for Women and Child Development organised a task group in June 2020.
  - The committee was presided over by former Samata Party chief Jaya Jaitly. Secretaries from several ministries and Dr. V K Paul, a member of the NITI Aayog's (Health) board, were also present.

- The committee has proposed raising the marriage age to 21 years old based on feedback from young adults from 16 colleges around the country. More than 15 NGOs were also involved in order to interact with young adults in rural areas and underserved populations.
- **Increasing the minimum age for marriage for women:**
  - The government decided to reconsider the legal age for women to be married for a number of reasons, including gender neutrality, welfare and nutrition standards. Early marriage and the subsequent pregnancies have an impact on the overall health and emotional well-being of mothers and their children as well as their nutritional status.
  - Infant and maternal mortality rates are also impacted, as well as the empowerment of women who are prevented from attending school or finding work due to early marriage.
  - reduction of child marriage Child marriage in the country has somewhat fallen from 27% in 2015–16 to 23% in 2019–20, according to the recently released National Family Health Survey (NFHS), however the government has been attempting to further reduce this number.
  - Gender parity In India, women only make up 25% of the labour force, compared to a global average of 60%. We cannot allow women to remain unemployed if we wish to rise to the status of a world power.
  - Implementing gender neutrality is necessary.
  - Eliminating stereotypes In a consultation paper on family law reform released in 2018, the Law Commission stated that having different legal criteria "contributes to the perception that women must be younger than their husbands."
  - The rule, according to proponents of women's rights, supports the idea that since women are more mature than men their age, they should be able to get married sooner.
- **Objections to the action:**
  - Raising the marriage age for women has been opposed by proponents of children's and women's rights as well as population and family planning experts on the grounds that such legislation would push a sizeable portion of the population into illegitimate unions.
  - They contend that while if the legal age of marriage for women in India is still 18, the drop in these partnerships is not due to the law as it currently stands, but rather to the increase in opportunities for girls to pursue education and jobs.
  - They contend that marginalised groups like the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes will suffer from the law's coercive nature and become lawbreakers.
  - According to the UNFPA's State of the World Report 2020, 51% of young women in India without any formal education and 47% of those with only an elementary education were married by the age of 18.

- As a result, education inequality is a serious problem.
- In addition, a research by the International Centre for Research on Women found that girls who leave school are 3.4 times more likely to get married or have their marriages already fixed than girls who stay in school.
- **Next actions and analysis:**
  - Societies must advance sustainably if women are to be granted more power. High-quality education and skills are the two most effective weapons for this, and to get there, young marriage pressure must be avoided.
  - Early pregnancy affects the mother's health and is associated with increased infant death rates. As a result, a mother's health and ability to procreate must be taken into consideration.
  - Targeted social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) initiatives must be given top priority by the government, together with the economic and social empowerment of women and girls. Raising the age at which women can legally be married would also contribute to gender neutrality.
  - expanding the scope of females' rights to education to encompass career development.

**Q2. What social impact does India's high rate of illiteracy have? Consider how technology might improve educational outcomes and close the literacy divide. (250 words)**

- **Paper & Topic: GS II → Social Sectors**
- **Model Answer:**
- **Introduction:**
  - India has the highest adult illiteracy rate in the world at 287 million. A 2017–18 UNESCO evaluation found that 35% of the world's population is illiterate. The information illustrated the shocking educational disparities in India.
  - A country cannot consider itself to be developed if 15% of its people lacks access to education, according to Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu, who has emphasised the need for more attention to adult education.

- **Body:**

- **The repercussions of widespread illiteracy on Indian society:**

- India's high unemployment rate is strongly impacted by illiteracy, as is the cycle of poverty. The current rate of illiteracy among the unemployed is 7.8%. They can't work or earn money since they are illiterate.
- As a result, ignorance and poverty are caused.
- People can't afford to take their children to school, so they grow up illiterate. Because of this, they are unable to get employment, and the cycle continues.
- This slow GDP growth is directly tied to illiteracy. Lack of literacy limits a person's access to opportunities, education, and growth. They are therefore completely unable to contribute to GDP growth.
- Child labour: One in every eleven children in India is a victim of child labour. More than a million kids work in a variety of jobs to support their families. Once more, these absurdly high rates are a result of the poverty that illiteracy causes.
- Criminality: The NCRB reports that 1,32,729 (or 27.37%) of the 4,78,600 prisoners incarcerated in India's various jails are illiterate, while 1,98,872 (or 41.55%) have only finished education up to Class 10. These two categories together account for about 28% of all convicts.
- Education increases employment possibilities, which lowers crime.
- Waste of the demographic dividend: The UNFPA predicts that India's demographic window will close in 2055.
- A fundamental reevaluation of educational spending and programmes is required in order to capitalise on the surge in the working-age population that will last until 2055.

- **Technology to improve learning outcomes and close literacy gaps:**

- Remote education: In order to handle the pandemic-induced learning challenge and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, it is crucial to reinvent education and adapt it to the unfathomable technological revolution.
- App-based education India is the second-largest smartphone market in the world after China, with over 220 million active users, according to a Counterpoint Research poll.
- This gives mobile apps that deliver e-learning content a tonne of new opportunities.
- By concentrating on particular themes, developers are creating educational apps.
- Complicated concepts are made simpler by using simple animations, games, riddles, and drawings.

- In order to enhance the teaching, learning, and evaluation procedures in the classroom, many Indian schools and colleges are integrating online learning management systems, or LMS platforms, into their web portals.
- Students can log in remotely to read course materials in addition to taking part in live sessions with lecturers.
- The LMS platform can be used to upload lectures and videos, making it simple for students to review the material repeatedly.
- Increasing access to education: Making smart phones and laptops available for viewing online instructional videos can help bridge the learning gap in areas with a dearth of schools and where it is difficult for children to commute to distant schools.
- improving the overall management of the educational system: Technology can help identify children who are at danger of dropping out so that early intervention can offer them assistance.
- It may also help with the reintegration of dropouts into the educational system.

- **Conclusion:**

- The call for technological integration at all instructional levels is taken seriously by India's new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. In order to lead activities aimed at giving the deployment and use of technology a strategic push, it intends to establish the National Education Technology Forum (NETF), an autonomous organisation. With the help of the revolution in educational technology, the next objective ought to be to achieve 100% literacy.