



Uncivil proposal

GS I: Communalism

Context: The astounding proposal by Uttar Pradesh and Haryana to enact a law to curb what they call 'love jihad' reeks of a vicious mix of patriarchy and communalism.



Issues with the proposed law

1. Idea amounts to legitimising a term that constitutes a slur against inter-faith marriages and relationships in which one of the parties is a Muslim man.
2. There is no legal sanction to self-serving and political terms such as 'love jihad' and there can be no legislation based on an extra-legal concept.
3. In any case, legislative intervention in marriages involving consenting adults will be clearly unconstitutional.
4. Marriages are a matter of personal choice. The domain of matrimony is occupied by separate laws governing weddings that take place under religious traditions, as well as the Special Marriage Act, which enables a secular marriage, including between couples from different faiths.
5. Earlier this year, the Union Home Ministry made it clear that the term is not defined in law while replying to a parliamentary question.

Hitting fossil fuel companies where it hurts

GS III: Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment

Bottom line: One way to undermine activities connected with networks of the fossil fuel industry complex is to take aim at their finances.





The need for Divestment in India

1. Arguments for divestment do not apply to India at this time. The reason is that India's contribution to the stock of greenhouse gases is minimal. Even in terms of annual flows, the country's contribution is less than two tonnes of CO₂/capita.

The transition from fossil to renewables

1. But policymakers should take note that the costs of production and storage of renewables are falling precipitously and we, therefore, need to be poised to make a just transition away from coal in the near future.
2. This process will be complex and necessarily involve many sectors and activities including land restoration, local jobs, and timely transfer of storage technologies for renewable energy, apart from dealing with entrenched vested and political interests. Recent reports from Prayas and the Centre for Science and Environment provide pathways for coal power plants to retire in a meaningful time frame.

Understanding divestment and the drive for it

1. A large network of activists including Rainforest Action Network, 350.org, Go Fossil Free, People and Planet, youth protesters, university students and faculty, and committed people have been undertaking systematically organised drives for divestment from fossil fuel companies.
2. Divestment is the process by which money put into stocks and bonds of certain companies is withdrawn. In this case, divestment has been directed against companies that extract, refine, sell and make profits from fossil fuels. The purpose is to restrict fossil fuel companies' ability to function with no regard for their impact on climate change.

Success to the movement

Targeting banks that provide loans to fossil fuel groups, organisations that are part of this movement have been hitting the bull's eye quite often. What drew media attention recently was that Goldman Sachs announced that it would, among other things, no longer finance new oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and also not provide capital for some of the worst kinds of coal mines, such as mountain-top mining.



Having an effect

When banks and investors begin to shift away from fossil fuel companies because they become risky business, then the campaign must be having an effect. The divestment movement against banks is gathering steam. All of these changes are positive steps. Whether these will effectively pull the planet from the brink is unclear.

Mains:

1. Write on the need for a systematic plan for divestment from fossil to non-fossil.