



Current Affairs of the Day

Not all Muslims oppose marriage Bill

Crux: Piecemeal changes in personal laws more effective than Uniform Civil Code.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill: Features

1. The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) or PCMA Bill, 2021, which has been referred to a standing committee seeks to raise the age of marriage for women to 21, making it the same as the age of marriage for men.
2. It also says that it will override all personal laws — Section 2 of the Bill states that it will apply to citizens of India “notwithstanding anything contrary or inconsistent in” Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872; the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936; the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937; the Special Marriage Act, 1954; the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; and the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969.
3. Separately, Section 6 also seeks to amend all the above laws, barring the Muslim Personal Law. It doesn't touch the Muslim Personal Law as it relies upon Shariat.
4. In each of these laws, the Bill substitutes the age of marriage of 18 for women with 21 years.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill: Opposition

1. It was introduced in the Lok Sabha by Union Minister Smriti Irani. It was later sent to a House panel for further scrutiny.
2. While Muslim political parties have opposed amendments to the child marriage law to raise the age of marriage for women to 21, terming them

TO OVERRIDE ALL OTHER LAWS & CUSTOMS

> Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021

proposes to raise legal age for women to marry from 18 to 21, on a par with men

> Seeks to amend other laws for uniformity in age of marriage — Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872; Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936; Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937; Special Marriage Act, 1954.

Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; Foreign Marriage Act, 1969

> Anyone married before the age of 21 can seek annulment up to 5 years instead of the current 2 from the time of attaining majority

> Amendments to override all other laws, customs, usage or practice

> Bill to come into force 2 years from the date it receives President's assent





an attack on personal laws, voices within the community advocating equal rights, have welcomed the move.

3. Muslims don't have a codified personal law, unlike other religious communities. The Muslim Personal (Shariat) Application Act, 1937 states that Shariat or the Islamic law will apply in all questions regarding marriage, dissolution of marriage, maintenance, dower, guardianship, gifts, etc.
4. Under Shariat, puberty or 15 years is the minimum age of marriage. The Koran, however, is not in favour of child marriages.

'No codified law'

1. While we welcome raising the age of marriage to 21, we want this amendment to the PCMA, 2006 to state unequivocally that this law applies to the Muslim community also. Otherwise, the Muslim girl does not stand to benefit from this law or its amendment, says a statement from the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA).
2. It has been 75 years of Independence and we still don't have a comprehensively codified personal law. All the other religions have their codified personal laws.
3. We have been deprived of our legislative protections when it comes to practices like polygamy, or child marriages or triple talaq, BMMA lamented.
4. The Supreme Court in Independent Thought versus Union of India, 2017, settled the law and held that the PCMA will overrule personal laws.

Piecemeal reforms versus the Uniform Civil Code

1. Unlike a blanket reform through a move like the Uniform Civil Code, piecemeal reforms in personal laws are more desirable, say, experts.
2. The Jaya Jaitly task force on the age of marriage didn't talk about changes to personal laws, but focused on women's empowerment, the need for access to education and health and preventing early pregnancies.
3. Not only has the government failed to address these concerns it will additionally curtail the freedom to marry at the age of 18, which is permitted globally.
4. In 2016, the Ministry of Law and Justice tasked the Law Commission to examine matters in relation to uniform civil code (UCC).
5. In 2018, when the Commission submitted its Consultation Paper on Reform of Family Law it steered clear of making any recommendations on UCC and held that it was "neither necessary nor desirable" and favoured "piecemeal changes to laws".



Omicron is less likely to put you in hospital: U.K. data

1. Preliminary data suggest that people with the Omicron variant of the coronavirus are between 50% and 70% less likely to need hospitalisation than those with the Delta strain, Britain's public health agency said.
2. The U.K. Health Security Agency findings add to emerging evidence that Omicron produces milder illness than other variants — but also spreads faster and better evades vaccines.
3. It cautioned that the analysis is “preliminary and highly uncertain” because of the small number of Omicron patients in hospitals and the fact that most were in younger age groups.
4. The agency's research said the protection a booster shot of vaccine gives against symptomatic Omicron infection appears to wane after about 10 weeks, though protection against hospitalisation and severe disease is likely to hold up for longer.

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| MAINS DAWP | <i>Q. Discuss complex diplomatic challenges India faces in Myanmar. Suggest a practical way forward.</i> |
| MCQs | <i>Q. Kaladan Multimodel transport project is linked to</i> <i>a. India-Myanmar</i> <i>b. India-Bangladesh</i> <i>c. India-Nepal</i> <i>d. India-Bhutan</i> |