

Current Affairs of the Day

Budgeting for the education emergency

It is astonishing that public expenditure data on the education sector are not easily available.

Highlights:

1. In the current Budget session, how much money the Central and State governments will allocate to education and for what purpose should be a matter of public concern and debate.
2. Even before the pandemic, public spending on education in most States was below that of other middle-income countries. Most major States spent in the range of 2.5% to 3.1% of State income on education, according to the Ministry of Education's Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education.
3. This compares with the 4.3% of GDP that lower-middle-income countries spent, as a group, between 2010-11 and 2018-19. Low-income countries increased their spending from 3.2% to 3.5% of GDP in the same period (World Bank, Education Finance Watch, 2021).

Petition on conjugal rights pending for months in SC

It assumes importance amid debate on marital rape.

Restitution of conjugal rights and liberty of women:

1. A petition questioning a law that forces a woman to return to her husband and denies her sexual autonomy has been pending in the Supreme Court for months without a hearing.





2. Restitution of conjugal rights, considered a medieval ecclesiastical law from England codified in several statutes, including the Hindu Marriage Act and Special Marriage Act, owes its survival largely to the fact that marital rape is not recognised as a crime.
3. The furious debate to criminalise marital rape compels a thought on how restitution of conjugal rights, though gender-neutral, places an additional burden on women by forcing them to stay with their husbands and threatens their bodily autonomy, privacy and individual dignity.
4. If a woman does not comply to return to her husband, the court could even attach her property.
5. Provisions of restitution of conjugal rights empower a husband or a wife to move the local district court, complaining that the other partner has “withdrawn” from the marriage without a “reasonable cause”.
6. The provisions violate a woman’s freedoms of association, to reside anywhere in the country and practice a profession.
7. That is if a woman stays away from her husband for her job, would it mean that she has “withdrawn” from the marriage. Besides, “reasonable cause” is subjective.

The courts have dealt with conjugal rights in a chequered manner:

1. The Supreme Court, in the Saroja Rani case, held that the “right of the husband or wife to one another’s society is inherent in the very institution of marriage”.
2. The fight against marital rape and restitution of conjugal rights has gained a new lease of life with the Supreme Court’s nine-judge Bench upholding privacy as a “constitutionally protected right”.
3. The top court, in its recent Joseph Shine judgment, concluded that the State cannot interfere in a person’s private affairs and “privacy is an inalienable right, closely associated with the innate dignity of an individual, and the right to autonomy and self-determination to make decisions”.
4. The time is ripe for the top court to pick up from where it left off.



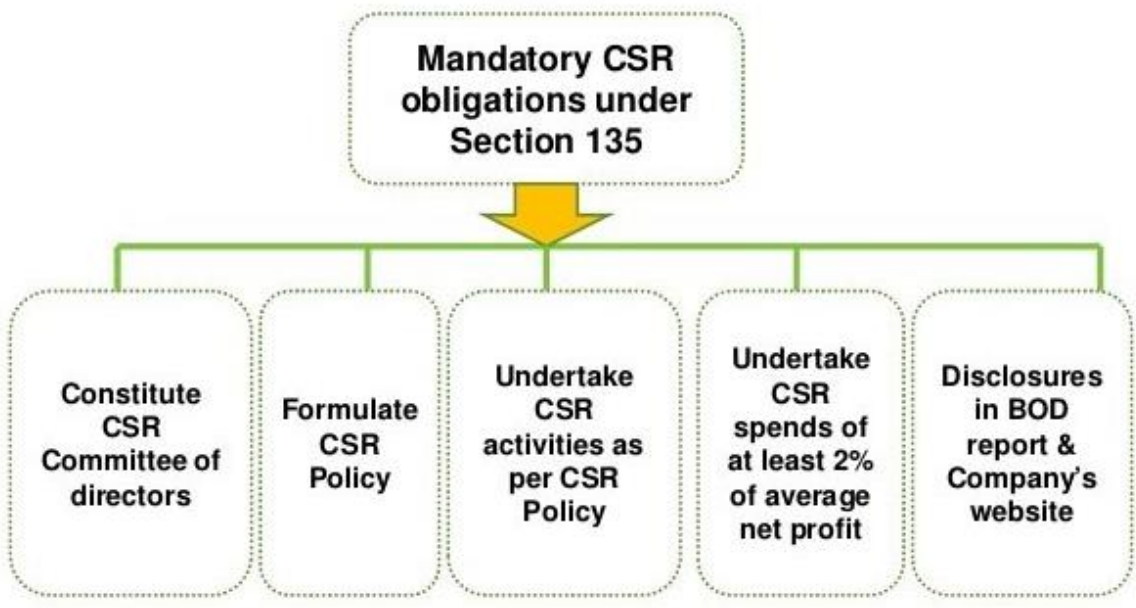
Third dose: CII calls for a higher CSR levy

1. Ahead of the upcoming Budget, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) recommended the introduction of an additional 1% corporate social responsibility (CSR) levy for a 12-month period to be used for providing 'precautionary' shots of the COVID-19 vaccine.
2. The industry body also urged the State governments to lift restrictions on economic activity.
3. The CII had suggested to the government that an additional 1%, apart from the mandated 2%, be added to the CSR requirements in the Budget for a specified period of 12 months so that boosters can be made available to all age groups.
4. The CII also requested fast-tracking imports of all international-approved mRNA and protein-based vaccines at a price to be determined by the government.





- **Mandatory CSR obligations on Companies covered u/s. 135(1) of the Companies Act, 2013.**



Peru declares an environmental emergency following an oil spill

1. Peru declared an environmental emergency to battle an oil spill caused by freak waves from a volcanic eruption in the South Pacific.
2. The stunningly powerful eruption on last Saturday of an undersea volcano near Tonga unleashed tsunami waves around the Pacific and as far away as the United States.
3. In Peru, the oil spill near Lima has fouled beaches, killed birds and harmed the fishing and tourism industries.





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4. With its 90-day decree, the government said it plans “sustainable management” of 21 beaches tarred by 6,000 barrels of oil that spilt from a tanker ship.
5. The environment ministry said 174 hectares — equivalent to 270 football fields — of sea, beaches and nature reserves were affected by the spill. Crews have been working for days to clean up the spill.

MCQs	<p>Q1. Recently an Oil spill led to the declaration of environmental emergency in</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Peru b. Argentina c. Spain d. France
MAINS DAWP	<p>Q1. Restitution of conjugal rights is against women's autonomy and dignity. Comment.</p>