

SOCIAL ISSUE**Banning Transgender Persons from Begging is Cruel and Illegal**

Issuance of Bans in Pune and Nagpur: Via an order issued under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, Pune police commissioner banned transgender persons from begging in various public spaces.

Constitutional Legality of Begging – A Brief Analysis

- Violation of Article 15: The ban specifically targets transgender individuals, potentially violating Article 15 of the Indian Constitution, which prohibits discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.
- *Suhail Rashid Bhat v State of Jammu and Kashmir* (2019): The Jammu and Kashmir High Court ruled against the prohibition of communicative activity by beggars in public spaces, stating it violated their rights under Article 19(1)(d) of the Constitution and criminalized poverty.
- *Harsh Mander v Union of India* (2018): The Delhi High Court struck down the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959, as applied to Delhi, holding that begging itself is not a crime. The court emphasized that begging is often a result of socio-economic deprivation.

Impact on Marginalized Groups

- Stigmatization and Discrimination: Bans and criminalization further stigmatize transgender individuals and perpetuate discrimination.
- Colonial Prejudices and Structural Discrimination: Policing of transgender individuals and the criminalization of begging are rooted in colonial prejudices, exacerbating the marginalization and violence faced by transgender communities.

Socio-Economic Rights and Progressive Realization

- Constitutional Obligations: The state must ensure the progressive realization of social and economic rights, enshrined in Part IV of the Constitution of India, including providing a living wage, maintaining standards of human health.
- Minimizing Inequalities in Income: Striving to minimize the inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also amongst groups of people.
- Need for Emancipation Schemes: Scholarships, reservations, and other / welfare initiatives are essential to address the socio-economic vulnerabilities faced by transgender individuals and other marginalized groups.

Legal precedent and socio-economic considerations emphasize the need for supportive measures rather than punitive measures to address the root causes of begging and marginalization.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**India's Nuanced Approach In The South China Sea**

India's External Affairs Minister articulated, in a joint statement during his visit to Manila, India's full support for the Philippines in upholding its national sovereignty.

A joint statement in 2023 between India and Philippines had called for China to adhere to the rules-based maritime order and acknowledge the International Court of Justice ruling of 2016 in favor of Manila.

South China Sea:

- An arm of the western Pacific Ocean that borders the Southeast Asian mainland.
- Bordered by Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.
- It is connected by the Taiwan Strait with the East China Sea and by the Luzon Strait with the Philippine Sea (both marginal seas of the Pacific Ocean).
- It comprises three archipelagos, namely, the Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, Pratas Islands and Macclesfield's Bank and Scarborough Shoal.

Dispute:

- China's Nine Dash Line: Defines area claimed by China – by far the largest portion of the Sea.
- Scarborough Shoal: Claimed both by the Philippines and China (known as Huangyan Island in China).
- Spratlys: Occupied by claimants, which consist of Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, China and Malaysia.
- Paracel Islands: Subject of overlapping claims by China, Vietnam and Taiwan.
- Island Chain Strategy: A geographical security concept crafted by the United States in the 1940s to deter China and the Soviet Union's maritime ambitions.

A policy evolution in India:

- India's engagement with the region was initially primarily economic, driven by its Look East Policy which aimed to:
 - enhance economic integration with Southeast Asia
 - secure energy resources to fuel its growing economy.
- The participation of Indian state-owned enterprises, such as the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation's overseas arm (ONGC Videsh), in oil and gas exploration projects in Vietnam's exclusive economic zones (EEZs) signifies:
 - India's economic stakes in the region
 - Support for the principle of freedom of exploration and exploitation of maritime resources within the bounds of international law (specifically UNCLOS).

The transformation of India's policy orientation from Look East to Act East under Narendra Modi's administration:

- It has marked a shift towards a more strategic and active engagement with the Indo-Pacific region.
- It reflects India's acknowledgment of the changing geopolitical landscape
- Need for a more proactive and multifaceted foreign policy approach.
- Act East Policy emphasizes economic integration and strategic partnerships.
- expanded security cooperation with countries in the Indo-Pacific including Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore, besides the Philippines.
- India has strengthened its own capacities through forward positioning, mission-based deployments, reinforced maritime domain awareness, and deep-water maritime facilities.

India's ties with China:

- The evolution of India's position on the South China Sea cannot be decoupled from its complex relationship with China.
- India and China have a long history of border disputes which have intensified since the Galwan Valley incident of 2020
- China's periodic incursions into India's territory and even renaming Indian villages in Arunachal Pradesh.

Developments between India and Philippines:

- The decision to open the resident defense attaché office in Manila
- Boosting cooperation between the Coast Guards of the two countries
- Acquisition of naval assets by Manila under a concessional line of credit from Delhi
- Expansion of training and joint exercises on maritime security and disaster responses
- Commencing a maritime dialogue

Agreement on regional and multilateral issues, particularly on maritime highways such as the South China Sea.

India's position on South China sea dispute:

- It adhered to international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)
- India's call to respect the 2016 Arbitral Award on the South China Sea is a departure from India's earlier position.
- From 'noted' to 'adherence to the 2016 Arbitral Award' is a candid recognition of its legitimacy.

Way Forward

- India's strategic recalibration has been driven by a recognition of the South China Sea's critical importance to regional security and the global maritime order.
- The disputes in the South China Sea, primarily involving China and several Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, have implications for the freedom of navigation and overflight
- The principles are vital for India's trade and energy transportation routes and that of countries across the globe.
- The ASEAN centrality in India's Indo-Pacific strategy makes it imperative for India to buttress the ASEAN position, though differences within the regional grouping continue to pose a challenge to such endeavors.
- India's advocacy for a rules-based international maritime order, especially its emphasis on UNCLOS
- It reflects a stance against unilateral actions that threaten regional stability.

- India's principled foreign policy approach indirectly challenges China's expansive territorial claims and activities in the South China Sea
- It reflects India's positioning of itself as a responsible stakeholder committed to regional stability and security.

India's nuanced approach in the South China Sea is emblematic of its broader strategy aiming to safeguard its interests while contributing to a collective effort to maintain peace, stability, and respect for international law in the Indo-Pacific region.

PRELIM FACT

1. National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC)

The Supreme Court has issued notice to two members of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) seeking an explanation from them for issuing non-bailable warrants ignoring a previous interim order of the Supreme Court.

National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC)

1. The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) is a quasi-judicial commission which was set up in 1988 under the Consumer Protection Act of 1986.
2. Its head office is in New Delhi.
3. The Commission is headed by a sitting or a retired Judge of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India or a sitting or a retired Chief Justice of an Hon'ble High Court.
4. The Commission is presently headed by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Amreshwar Pratap Sahi, former Chief Justice of Patna and Madras High Courts.
5. Mandate:
 - a) Section 21 of Consumer Protection Act, 1986 posits that the National Commission shall have jurisdiction to entertain a complaint valued more than two crore and also have Appellate and Revisional jurisdiction from the orders of State Commissions or the District fora as the case may be.
 - b) Section 23 of Consumer Protection Act, 1986, provides that any person aggrieved by an order of NCDRC, may prefer an Appeal against such order to Supreme Court of India within a period of 30 days.

About quasi-judicial commission

1. A quasi-judicial body is a body which has powers and procedures resembling those of a court of law or judge such as an arbitrator or tribunal board.
2. It is obliged to objectively determine facts and draw conclusions from them so as to provide the basis of an official action.
3. Their powers are usually limited to a very specific area of expertise and authority, such as land use and zoning, financial markets, public standards etc.
4. National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Women, National Commission for Minorities, etc. are examples of quasi-judicial bodies.

2. Tachyons

Physicists have recently proposed the radical idea that our universe is dominated by tachyons, a hypothetical kind of particle that always moves faster than light.

Tachyons

1. They are hypothetical kind of particles that move faster than light.
2. The term "tachyon" was introduced by physicist Gerald Feinberg in 1967 to describe hypothetical particles that could travel faster than light.
3. It is different from "bradyons" like protons, electrons, and neutrons, which move slower than light.
4. Unlike bradyons, they have not been observed and are theorized to possess imaginary mass, meaning their mass squared would be negative.
5. According to special relativity, particles with mass cannot attain or exceed the speed of light in a vacuum because their energy would become infinite.
6. This intriguing property implies that tachyons could potentially travel faster than light without violating current understanding of the laws of physics.
7. Tachyons would slow down if they gained energy and accelerate if they lost energy.
8. Scientists have conducted a few experiments in search of tachyons using a detector called a Cherenkov detector.
9. In this setup, particles move through a medium, and if their speed exceeds the speed of light for that medium, Cherenkov radiation occurs.
10. It is to be noted that while nothing can travel faster than light in a vacuum, certain mediums allow particles to potentially exceed the cosmic speed limit.

3. Gross Fixed Capital Formation

The failure of private investment to pick up pace has been one of the major issues plaguing the Indian economy.

About Gross Fixed Capital Formation

1. GFCF refers to the growth in the size of fixed capital in an economy. Fixed capital require investment for their creation.
2. GFCF serves as a rough indicator of how much the private sector in an economy is willing to invest.
3. GFCF includes capital formation as a result of investment by the government.
4. Why does it matters:
 - a) GFCF helps in creation of fixed capital that helps to boost economic growth and improve living standards.
 - b) Fixed capital largely determines the overall output of an economy.

Developed economies such as the U.S. possess more fixed capital per capita than developing economies such as India.

About the trend seen in private investment in India

1. In India, private investment began to pick up significantly mostly after the economic reforms of the late 1980s and the early 1990s that improved private sector confidence.
2. From independence to economic liberalisation, private investment largely remained either slightly below or above 10% of the GDP. Public investment as a percentage of GDP, on the other hand, steadily rose over the decades from less than 3% of GDP in 1950-51 to overtake private investment as a percentage of GDP in the early 1980s.
3. Public investment began to drop post-liberalisation with private investment taking on the leading role in fixed capital formation. The growth in private investment lasted until the global financial crisis of 2007-08. It rose from around 10% of GDP in the 1980s to around 27% in 2007-08.
4. From 2011-12 onwards, however, private investment began to drop and hit a low of 19.6% of the GDP in 2020-21.

4. Randomised control trials- Techniques that transformed TB care

Clinical trials performed using the randomisation technique have been instrumental in shaping modern medicine.

How randomisation technique transformed TB care

1. Clinical trials utilizing randomization have profoundly impacted modern medicine by providing a reliable and impartial means to assess treatment efficacies.
2. These trials are foundational to various medical advancements, such as understanding aspirin's preventative role against heart attacks, crafting antiretroviral therapies for HIV, employing cognitive behavioral therapy for mental disorders, and developing the latest COVID-19 vaccines.
3. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) were used to test streptomycin, marking it as the first effective antibiotic treatment against tuberculosis (TB). Sir Austin Bradford Hill is credited with the work.
4. This transition changed TB management from a specialized surgical concern to a broadly accessible primary care matter.
5. Beyond TB, Hill's legacy continues with the 'Bradford Hill Criteria,' which are fundamental in modern epidemiology.
 1. These nine criteria strength, consistency, specificity, temporality, biological gradient, plausibility, coherence, experiment, and analogy establish a structured approach to confirming causal relationships between specific factors and health outcomes.
 6. This framework has been instrumental in identifying alcohol as a risk factor for cardiovascular diseases and linking sugar-sweetened beverages with obesity.
 7. Hill's criteria were crucial in proving the connection between smoking and lung cancer, countering the misinformation spread by the tobacco industry.
 8. This research also influenced a major shift in public health policies and the general public's view on tobacco use.

About the Randomised control trials technique

- RCTs involve dividing a population into smaller groups, in order to comparatively see the outcomes of an external stimulus.
- For ex- If the aim of a study is to understand whether a free grains distribution scheme helped improve the nutrition levels among people living in a district, researchers will first create two groups within the population, and then put people into those groups randomly.

- One group (called the control group) does not receive the grains or the external stimulus, while the other group (treatment group) does. After a designated period of time, details of how both the groups are doing would be collected. In this way, the goal is to understand what the overall impact is of introducing something new could be.

5. Rivers In News

a) Jadhah River

- Issues: Disruption of flow due to climate change
- Origin: Lower Himalayan ranges in Arunachal Pradesh
- Tributary of: Brahmaputra (northern tributary)
- Flows Through: Assam, meets Brahmaputra near Majuli Island
- Characteristics: Flashy river, prone to sudden floods with high sediment load and debris, frequently changes course during flash floods

b) Noyyal River

- Issues: Pollution and choking by plastics and sewage
- Origin: Velliangiri Hills (South-Kailash) in Tamil Nadu
- Tributary of : Cauvery river
- Flows through: Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Karur, Erode districts
- Characteristics: The Central Government provides financial assistance from the National River Restoration Fund, managed by the Ministry of Jal Shakti

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Should live-in relationships be regulated by the state? And, if so, to what extent? Examine and give your opinion in the light of recent Bill passed by Uttarakhand Assembly.

The debate around the regulation of live-in relationships by the state has gained new dimensions with the introduction of the Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill 2024. This legislative move seeks to formalize live-in relationships, bringing them under a legal framework, a first in India. The Bill's provisions touch upon various aspects of live-in relationships, sparking discussions on privacy, autonomy, and the role of state regulation in personal relationships.

Legal Framework and Provisions

- The Uttarakhand UCC Bill 2024 mandates the registration of live-in relationships, introducing a legal recognition previously absent.
- Couples in live-in relationships are required to submit a statement for registration to the Registrar, aiming to equate the legal benefits available to them with those afforded to married couples.
- This step is seen as a progressive move towards acknowledging and legitimizing such relationships.

Controversies and Concerns

- Parental Intimation Requirement: A significant controversy arises from the Bill's requirement for the Registrar to inform the parents of partners under the age of 21. Critics argue this provision infringes on the rights to privacy and autonomy, challenging the notion of adult consent and the legal age of adulthood in India.
- Penalties for Non-Registration: The Bill also proposes penalties for couples who fail to register their live-in relationship, including potential imprisonment and fines. This punitive approach has raised concerns about criminalizing personal choices and the state's intrusion into private lives.

Implications and Debates

The regulation of live-in relationships through the Uttarakhand UCC Bill brings to the forefront debates on individual freedoms versus the need for legal recognition and protection. While the legal framework aims to provide benefits and rights similar to those enjoyed by married couples, it also poses questions about the limits of state intervention in personal relationships.

The Uttarakhand UCC Bill 2024 represents a landmark attempt to address the legal status of live-in relationships in India, providing a framework for their recognition and regulation. However, the Bill also highlights the delicate balance between extending legal protections and respecting individual rights and freedoms. As society evolves, the need for legal frameworks that reflect contemporary social realities becomes apparent, yet such regulations must be crafted with careful consideration of personal autonomy and privacy. The ongoing discourse surrounding the Uttarakhand UCC Bill serves as a critical examination of how state policies intersect with personal lives, urging a thoughtful approach to legislating on matters of personal relationships.

MCQs

1. In India, Legal Services Authorities provide free legal services to which of the following type of citizens?
 1. Person with an annual income of less than Rs. 1,00,000
 2. Transgender with an annual income of less than Rs. 2,00,000
 3. Member of Other Backward Classes (OBC) with an annual income of less than Rs. 3,00,000
 4. All Senior Citizens
 Select the correct answer using the code given below:
 (a) **1 and 2 only** (b) 3 and 4 only
 (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1 and 4 only
2. Consider the following statements about the Jadhav River:
 1. It is a tributary of the Brahmaputra River.
 2. It originates from the hills of Arunachal Pradesh.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
 (c) **Both 1 and 2** (d) Neither 1 nor 2
3. The Noyyal River is a tributary of the
 - (a) River Godavari (b) River Mahanadi
 - (c) **River Kaveri** (d) River Vaigai
4. Which one of the following is the primary purpose of "Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)", seen in the news recently?
 - (a) Determine the cost-effectiveness of a treatment
 - (b) **Evaluate the efficacy and safety of a treatment or intervention**
 - (c) Assess the long-term side effects of a treatment
 - (d) Provide a historical overview of medical treatments
5. Consider the following statements:
 1. Look East Policy prioritized relations with ASEAN nations, while Act East Policy includes a wider range of East Asian countries.
 2. The South China Sea is crucial for regional security and the global maritime order.
 3. India promotes a rules-based international maritime order, with a particular emphasis on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
 Which of the statements given above are correct?
 (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
 (c) 1 and 3 only (d) **1, 2 and 3**
6. Consider the following statements:
 1. According to International Criminal Law, targeted killings refer to purposefully and systematically assassinating people seen as enemies by a country.
 2. Article 51 of the UN Charter provides for the right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations.
 Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?
 (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
 (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. Consider the following statements with respect to the Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF):
 1. It is a component of GDP that shows how much new value added in an economy is invested rather than consumed.
 2. GFCF is crucial because it directly contributes to the production capacity of an economy, influencing both economic growth and living standards.
 3. Purchases of stocks and bonds are included in GFCF.
 4. In national accounting, GFCF is considered as a form of investment expenditure.
 How many of the statements given above are correct?
 (a) Only one (b) Only two
 (c) **Only three** (d) All four
8. Consider the following statements regarding Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019:
 1. The Act does not penalise Transgenders for begging, forced or bonded labour.
 2. The Act does differentiate between transgenders, transsexuals, intersex persons and genderqueer.
 3. Getting Transgender Certificate and Identity Cards as per their self-perceived identity is an important provision of The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
 How many of the above statements are correct?
 (a) **Only one** (b) Only two
 (c) All three (d) None
9. With reference to Nirbhay Cruise Missile, consider the following statements:
 1. Nirbhay is short-range super-sonic cruise missile.
 2. The operational range of Nirbhay Missiles is about 290 km.
 3. It is a Joint initiative between India and Israel.
 How many of the above statements are correct?
 (a) Only one (b) Only two
 (c) All three (d) **None**
10. Consider the following statements:
 1. The demographic dividend means the chance for more economic growth when there are more people of working age compared to those who are not working age.
 2. Countries with a high dependency ratio usually experience demographic dividend due to increased government spending on social welfare programs.
 Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?
 (a) **1 only** (b) 2 only
 (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2