



# DAILY MAINS NEWSLETTER

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## Mains Value Addition

**Needed: full disclosure on electoral bonds**

**Syllabus--** GS 2: Governance, RPA.

### Analysis: -

- The Supreme Court's suggestion to 'match the following' on political donations is impractical and incorrect
- In 2014, the Delhi High Court held that both the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) were guilty of illegally accepting donations from two companies registered in India but whose controlling shareholder was Vedanta, a foreign company.
- The court held that this was in contravention of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 1976, as the donations accrued from "foreign sources" within the meaning of law.

- Following this indictment, the two parties came together in the last memorable bipartisan move. In 2016 and 2018, the government amended the FCRA through the annual Finance Bills, to retrospectively legalise the violations.
- The amendments and subsequent changes brought in by the current government enabled new and regressive pathways that afford full anonymity to corporate and foreign political donors.
- While recently hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) by the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR), the Supreme Court downplayed the concerns of the corrupting influence of anonymous corporate and foreign money.
- It offered us voters the suggestion of "match the following".

**An acquittal with no good, but the bad and the ugly**

**Syllabus –** GS 2: Governance

### Analysis: -

- The recent judgment of a trial court acquitting Tarun Tejpal, a former editor of a newsmagazine, who was charged, in 2013,



of having sexually assaulted an employee, a young woman journalist, during an event the newsmagazine had organised in Goa, has created a furore and raised many questions about the law.

- The investigating officer has also been pulled up not only for the lapses in investigation but also for gaps in her knowledge of technology.
- The Goa government filed an appeal against Mr. Tejpal's acquittal in the Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court requesting an immediate hearing.
- The Solicitor General of India, Tushar Mehta, during the hearing, said that the lower court's judgment lacked sensitivity regarding crimes against women and awareness of the sections of criminal laws.
- "The law has evolved. The entire judgement proceeds as if the victim is on trial," he added.
- The Supreme Court of India has repeatedly said that the purpose of cross-examining a survivor of rape is not to humiliate her but to get to the truth of the case.
- Therefore, questions about the past sexual life of the survivor should not have been permitted to be asked by the defence counsel as they violated the survivor's right to a fair trial.
- The law does not permit the character assassination of a victim any more.

## Mains Analysis

### America's mistakes in the 'forever war'

#### Why in News?

US administration has set the September 11 deadline for all American troops to leave Afghanistan, winding up 20 years of the invasion by the United States.

#### Syllabus—GS 2- International Relations

#### Background: -

- US Administration to leave Afghanistan after 20 years war.
- The peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban that started in Doha last year have been frozen for months.
- The bid by the U.S. to hold a summit in Istanbul between the warring parties has been a non-starter. On the ground, the Taliban are making steady advances.
- the Taliban have seized eight districts in four different regions. At least six provisional capitals, including Kabul, Lashkar Gah (Helmand) and Kandahar.
- As of now, about 22% of Afghanistan's 398 districts are in the Taliban's control and 24% with the government, while more than half of the country's territories are contested.

#### A neocon war

- The longest war in America's history is also turning out to be one of its most disastrous.
- Terrorist networks, which the U.S. vowed to destroy when it launched its global war on

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terror in Afghanistan, are now scattered across Asia and Africa.

- The U.S. made three fundamental mistakes, which led to the superpower's humiliating exit from this clichéd 'graveyard of empires'.
- First, the U.S. went into Afghanistan without learning anything from the country's history, or was blindsided by the unipolar hubris.
- Once they invaded Afghanistan, the U.S., given the mistakes the British and the Soviets committed, could have had a strategically focused campaign, targeting its enemy, al-Qaeda, which was behind the September 11 attacks.
- It should have gone after the terrorists, destroyed their networks and then withdrawn.
- U.S. administration, had set more ambitious goals for itself. It wanted to topple the Taliban and rebuild a centralised "democratic" state in Afghanistan.
- Now, the U.S. is retreating, practically leaving Afghanistan to the mercy of the Taliban, in return for assurances from them that they would not assist the terrorists such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

### **Strategic failure**

- After the Taliban regime was toppled and al-Qaeda driven back into the caves and mountains, the U.S. still had a chance to stabilise the country with help from its different factions and leave.

- The Taliban sought modest terms — Mullah Omar, their leader, should be allowed to return home. But the Americans rejected the offer and promised to destroy the Taliban in every corner of the country.
- The Taliban are an indigenous militancy with deep roots in Afghanistan's Pashtun majority. Toppling them from power was easy, but defeating them in their country was not.
- And after vowing to defeat them, the U.S. launched the Iraq invasion to topple Saddam Hussein and export democracy there. This was the second mistake.
- The U.S. took Pakistan's tactical support for its war on terror for granted, overlooking the fact that Pakistan had deep strategic ties with the Taliban.
- Pakistan played a double game by supporting the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan while at the same time offering refuge and support to the Taliban.
- By the time the U.S. shifted its focus back to Afghanistan, after defeating the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and amid growing calls at home to end the "endless wars", the Afghan war had already been lost.

### **Surrender to the Taliban**

- It seems to have reached the conclusion long ago that the war was one that could not be turned around.
- The war was also becoming increasingly unpopular at home, prompting Presidents, from Barack Obama to Donald Trump and Joe Biden, to promise to wind it up.

- The U.S. has also been shifting its focus to East Asia where China is rising. And given the foreign policy challenges the U.S. is facing now elsewhere, continuing troops and commitments in Afghanistan makes little sense.
- But the U.S. could have opted for a more orderly withdrawal. Instead, it surrendered to the Taliban's terms to pull back its troops. This was the third mistake.
- The Taliban have not defeated the Afghan troops yet.
- The government still controls most of the country's population centres. The Taliban's efforts to take over provincial capitals were successfully thwarted in the recent past.
- US administration went for talks with the Taliban on their terms. The Afghan government was kept out of the whole process because the Taliban do not recognise them as being legitimate.
- And the U.S. struck a direct deal with the Taliban, without addressing any of the Afghan concerns.

### Way Forward

- The American exit would now decisively shift the balance of power in favour of the Taliban.
- The insurgents have always known this. They have stepped up attacks and carried out targeted killings aimed at weakening the Afghan government and terrorising society immediately after signing the agreement with the U.S. in February 2020.

- And ever since the remaining U.S. troops started pulling back from Afghanistan on May 1, the Taliban have started capturing more territories.
- The war may be winding down for the Americans. But for Afghans, it will continue in one form or another.

### Question: -

Critically evaluate American efforts in Afghanistan peace talks. Illustrate the impact on India.

### Equality is everyone's work

#### Why in News?

Since the revision of GDP calculation methodology in 2015, there's been a debate about how India calculates its GDP & about GDP as a measure itself.

#### Syllabus— GS1: Issues related to Women Empowerment

#### Background: -

- On National Science Day 2020, which was dedicated to women scientists, Women & Child Development Ministry announced that 11 women scientists would be honoured with national chairs named after historical women scientists.
- Recently IIT Bombay too has announced its own women-only chair after donor alum on the pretext that a diverse & inclusive workforce build a better workforce.
- While these announcements are well-intentioned moves to address the long-standing & vexed problem of gender

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disparity in science & technology but their efficacy in addressing the root cause is well debated.

### **The Gender-Disparity:**

- India faces a inconvertible gender disparity mainly in the STEM institutes.
- Though women constitute nearly 50% of science PhDs employed in Indian higher education but data from the physics, engineering & industrial workforce show a large gender gap that widens further at the higher echelons.
- Even in celebrated IIT Bombay, in the domain of engineering & science out of total 680 faculty & 60 prestigious chairs, only 14% of the faculty & 9% of the chairs are respectively women.
- Disparity popularly explains as the discriminatory familial responsibilities weigh women down.
- Many studies in the gender disparity have given many concrete facts to counter the gender disparity rules such as:
- Studies that measured productivity across gender, finds no deficit among women scientists in Indian institutions.
- Further, the studies also found that despite similar scientific productivity, women scientists tended to occupy lower rungs of the institutional hierarchy.
- For instance, a drop in the selected women-fraction compared to that of the pool is a hallmark of the discrimination in the process.

### **Systemic genderisation plays out in multiple ways.**

- It is still often assumed that women are the primary caregivers, therefore irrespective of merit they are liable to compromise their professional responsibilities.
- While hiring a woman scientists to a leadership position, it is still considered to judge her parental or life-partner status, overlooking her merit.
- It is still a common hidden norm that women spouses of hired faculty will not be hired.
- Over the above, the presence of rampant Gender-based harassment.
- For instances, involving social scientist in recommending JEE fee-wavier for women has become a good step among other reforms.
- But not involving social scientists in decision making to increase gender diversity among JEE rankers, ended up not addressing the elephant in the room.
- Addressing disparity should be everybody's responsibility.
- The notion that it is the exclusive responsibility of women to hire more women, mentor young women etc has to be ended & everyone has to take responsibility in this regard.

### **Way Forward: -**

- It is high time for all to impelled to make this their cause rather than leave it to the voluntary groups.

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- The way forward is to dissolve the systematic barriers to equity in the institutions of higher learning. The pathways to do that are as follow:
  - Make diversity an imperative not just because it builds better businesses but because it is the right & just thing to do.
  - Acknowledge that gender discrimination reigns within, so stop the women-only training workshops to fix the women & instead gender-sensitize all faculty & management.
  - Because all regardless of gender are raised to accept sexist thought & action.
  - Also, invest in diversity experts to be observers in all human resource domain.
  - Involve social scientists, so that interventions are grounded in evidence.

**Question: -**

In the modern times, with Hyper-globalization, everyone has exposed to global debates on systemic gender discriminations. Gender disparity is an outcome of a flawed meritocracy & is everybody's responsibility, not just that of women chairs to fix. Dicuss.