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‘PM Cares Fund’

- As per the latest findings, 64 per cent of the amount of Rs 10,990 crore collected by the PM CARES Fund between March 27, 2020 and March 31, 2021 remained unutilized till the end of March.
- ‘PM CARES Fund’ was introduced as a ‘dedicated fund with the prime objective of dealing with any kind of emergency and providing relief to the affected’. However, only Rs 3,976 crore was spent by PM Cares in the first year of its operation.

Issues related to PM Cares Fund and its functioning:

- The ‘PM CARES Fund’, ever since its announcement, has been under suspicion, and there have been calls for transparency in the fund’s operation by opposition parties.

About PM-CARES:

- Formation of ‘Prime Minister’s Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund: PM-CARES Fund’, accepting donations during the COVID-19 pandemic, and other similar emergencies and to provide relief.

About PM Cares Fund?

- PM CARES Fund was established on March 27, 2020 as a charitable trust under the ‘Registration Act, 1908’.
- It can avail donations from foreign contributions and donations made to this fund are 100% tax-free.
- PM-CARES is different from the Prime Minister’s National Relief Fund (PMNRF).

Fund Management:

- The Prime Minister is the ex-officio chairman of the PM CARES Fund and the Defense Minister, Home Minister and Finance Minister are the ex-officio trustees of the Government of India fund.

Sachindra Nath Sanyal

- The 80th death anniversary of 'Shachindranath Sanyal' (1893 – 1942) was celebrated on 7th February. He was born on 3 April 1893 in Varanasi.

Role in India's Freedom Struggle:

- Shachindranath Sanyal founded the 'Hindustan Republican Association' (HRA) with the aim of conducting armed resistance against the British Empire in India.
- He established a branch of 'Anushilan Samiti' in Patna in the year 1913.
- In the 1912 Delhi Conspiracy Case, Sanyal along with Rash Behari Bose attacked the then Viceroy Lord Hardinge.
- He was widely involved in the 'Ghadar' conspiracy schemes, and went underground after it was exposed in February 1915. Shachindranath Sanyal was a close associate of Rash Behari Bose.
- After Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose left for Japan, Shachindranath Sanyal was considered the most senior leader of India's revolutionary movement.
- He was the mentor of revolutionaries like Chandrashekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh.
- Sanyal and Mahatma Gandhi were involved in a famous debate published in 'Young India' between 1920 and 1924. Sanyal presented his arguments against Gandhi's 'Gradualist Approach'.
- Sanyal was sentenced to life imprisonment for his involvement in the Kakori conspiracy and was imprisoned in the Cellular Jail in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Here he wrote his book, Bandi Jeevan (A Life of Captivity, 1922).

Section 498A: IPC

- The Supreme Court in a recent judgment underscored the growing misuse of Section 498A of the IPC, saying that it is leading to conflict in marriage relations.
- The object of section 498A is to prevent cruelty to a woman by her husband and in-laws by means of prompt state intervention.
- The Court observed that there is an increasing tendency to use provisions like section 498A of the IPC as a tool to settle personal enmity against the husband and his relatives.

Section 498A of IPC:

- Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code-1860 was passed by the Indian Parliament in the year 1983.
- Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code is a criminal law.
- It has been defined that if a woman's husband or a relative of her husband has committed cruelty to a woman, it shall be punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine.
- Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code is the biggest defense against violence against women (VAW), which is a reflection of the reality of domestic violence that takes place within the confines of a house.

Domestic Violence Act:

- Physical violence, such as slapping, kicking and beating.
- Sexual violence, including forced intercourse and other forms of sexual harassment.
- Emotional (psychological) abuse such as humiliation, intimidation, threats of harm, threats to take away children.
- Controlling behaviour, including isolating a person from family and friends, monitoring their activities and restricting access to financial resources, employment, education or medical care.

Indian laws that help prevent incidents of violence against women?

- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- Sati Commission (Prevention) Act, 1987
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013
- Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013

Misuse of Section 498A:

Against husband and relatives:

- It is misused by women for arrest in fake cases against husband and his relatives under 498A.

Attempts to blackmail:

- In many cases these days, section 498A is made a means of blackmailing the wife (or her close relatives) when she is upset by a tense marital situation.
- Due to this, a complaint under section 498A in most cases usually demands a large sum of money for out-of-court settlement.

Depreciation of the institution of marriage:

- The court specifically observed that the provisions are being misused and exploited to such an extent that it is affecting the very basis of the foundation of marriage.
- This ultimately does not prove to be a good sign for the health of the society at large.
- Women have started abusing Section 498A of IPC as this law has become a tool for their vengeance or out of marital status.

Malimath Committee Report, 2003:

- Similar views were expressed in the 2003 Malimath Committee report on reforms in the criminal justice system.
- The committee had said that section 498A of IPC can be misused.

Way Forward:

- It is important to note that a large number of accused get acquitted due to prolonged trial. Sometimes the police make such a weak case that the accused is acquitted of the crime. At the same time, the complainants are either tired or forced to compromise or are ready to withdraw the case.
- Therefore changing the attitudes of the state and the people, laws related to domestic violence need to be implemented for their real purpose by preventing possible "abuse" of them.

Nai Roshni scheme

- Recently Rajya Sabha has been informed by the Ministry of Minority Affairs that in the last three years (2018-19 to 2020-21) the government has sanctioned Rs.26 crore under the Nai Roshni scheme, through which about one lakh women has been trained.

About New Roshni Scheme:

- Nai Roshni- a leadership development program for minority women which is a central sector scheme for women belonging to minority communities in the age group of 18 to 65 years.
- It was started in the year 2012-13.
- The objective of the scheme is to build trust among other communities living in the same village/localities including minority women, their neighbours, by providing knowledge, tools and techniques to interact with government systems, banks and other institutions at all levels.
- It is run across the country with the help of NGOs, civil societies and government institutions.
- It includes various training modules such as women's leadership, educational programmes, health and sanitation, Swachh Bharat, financial literacy, life skills, women's legal rights, digital literacy and advocacy for social and behavioral change.

Significance of the plan:

- Empowerment of women is not only necessary for equality, but it is also a very important element for poverty reduction, economic development and strengthening of civil society.
- Poverty-stricken women and children always suffer the most and need support. It is even more important to empower women especially because in the homes they bring up, nurture their children.
- It helps minority women to move out of the confines of their home and community and to claim their fair share on the government's development benefits for improving living and living conditions, services collectively or individually, they take leadership roles and assert their rights by gaining access to facilities, skills.

Other schemes related to minority women:

- Garib Nawaz Rozgar Yojana
- Learn and Earn
- Begum Hazrat Mahal Girls Scholarship
- Nayi Manjil

- Ustad (upgradation of skills and training in traditional arts/crafts for development)

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