

UPSC Syllabus Topic GS Paper 2 International Relations – Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

The Ramifications of the US-China Summit on India – Navigating the US-China Truce

Recent US-China Summit: Key Takeaways

The recent US-China summit occurred on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, addressing several key issues:

1. Discussion Topics:

- Regulation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and regional security issues were prominent on the agenda.
- Renewal of high-level political and military communication channels between the US and China.

2. Focus on Competition:

- The summit primarily centered on managing the competition between the US and China, rather than forging a strategic partnership.

3. Global Crises:

- Discussions extended to global crises, including the situations in the Middle East and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

Impact on India:

1. Indo-Pacific Strategy:

- The summit's outcomes could influence India's Indo-Pacific strategy, given the involvement of two major regional players, the US and China.
- The balance of power and alliances in the region may be affected, impacting India's strategic positioning.

2. Economic Implications:

- Xi Jinping's efforts to re-engage US businesses could pose a challenge to India's endeavors to attract Western investment.
- India must enhance its economic appeal to remain a viable alternative to China for Western businesses.

3. Strategic and Security Concerns:

- Talks between Biden and Xi on regional security, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, are crucial for India to monitor.
- The outcomes may influence India's own security strategies and geopolitical considerations.

4. Balancing Act:

- Improved ties between the US and China allow India to navigate a better balancing act.

- India can work towards enhancing relations with both nations while maintaining strategic autonomy.

The developments from the summit carry implications for India's geopolitical, economic, and strategic considerations, necessitating a nuanced approach to navigate the evolving dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region.

UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 2 Governance – Mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections.

Navigating Domestic Violence: A Survivor's Dilemma When the Justice System Falls Short

Understanding Domestic Violence in India

Domestic violence, as per the Domestic Violence Act, refers to any harm or damage to a woman in a domestic relationship. This encompasses physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and financial abuse, as well as threats and harassment related to dowry demands.

Statistics:

- A crime against a woman is committed every three minutes in India.
- The 2019 National Crime Records Bureau report records around 400,000 registered domestic violence cases.

Challenges in Combating Domestic Violence:

1. Widespread Occurrence:

- The National Family Health Survey 5 (2019-20) reveals that 30% of Indian women aged 18-49 have experienced physical violence, indicating the pervasive nature of the problem.

2. Dowry-Related Deaths:

- On average, 21 women die every day in India due to dowry-related violence (2015 NCRB report).

3. Ineffective Legal Support:

- The legal process often disadvantages women, hindering their pursuit of justice in domestic violence cases.

4. Police Reluctance:

- Police reluctance to file FIRs and the suggestion to resolve issues through counseling display a patriarchal bias.

5. Judicial Prejudices:

- Judicial comments implying misuse of domestic violence laws can discourage victims from seeking legal redress.

Government Initiatives:

1. One Stop Centres (OSCs):

- Integrated support centers for women affected by violence, including domestic violence.

2. Ujjawala Homes and SwadharGreh:

- Residential facilities providing shelter, counseling, and support to women victims.

3. Emergency Response Support System (112):

- A unified emergency number for immediate assistance in domestic violence cases.

Legal Provisions Combatting Domestic Violence:

1. Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961:

- Criminalizes the giving and receiving of dowries.

2. IPC Amendments - Section 498A and 304B:

- Specific sections addressing domestic violence and dowry-related deaths.

3. Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005:

- Comprehensive legislation offering protection and legal recourse for victims.

Recommendations:

1. Report-Based Registration Enhancements:

- Implement strategies like decoy operations and online FIR registration for timely action.

2. Boosting Conviction Rates:

- Establish fast-track courts and employ online investigation tracking systems.

3. Support for Marginalized Groups:

- Include specific provisions for women from disadvantaged communities.

4. Helpline and Shelter Homes:

- Establish a nationwide helpline and increase shelter homes.

5. Cyber-crime Measures:

- Provide enhanced training for law enforcement in cyber tools.

6. Increasing Female Police Representation:

- Conduct recruitment drives to augment women in the police force.

7. Institutional and Legal Reforms:

- Create databases for criminals and vulnerable groups, and amend laws for effectiveness.

8. Utilizing Nirbhaya Fund:

- Properly allocate and utilize the Nirbhaya Fund for women's safety initiatives.

These recommendations, if implemented, can contribute to a more effective and responsive approach to combatting domestic violence in India.

UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS Paper 2 Social Justice – Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health.

Navigating the Realm of Generic Medicines: Challenges, Allegations, and Avenues for Reform

Generic medicines are pharmaceutical drugs that contain the same active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) as a brand-name drug whose patent has expired. While they have the same API, generic drugs may differ in characteristics such as manufacturing process, formulation, excipients, color, taste, and packaging.

Allegations against big pharmaceutical brands include:

1. **High Costs:** Many branded drugs are expensive compared to their generic counterparts, which are more affordable.
2. **Unethical Practices:** There are allegations, as per the 1975 Hathi Committee, that branded companies use unethical marketing techniques and propagate the myth that only they have high-quality products.
3. **Nexus between Pharma Companies and Doctors:** There are concerns about an alleged nexus between pharmaceutical companies and doctors, leading to unethical marketing practices or kickbacks.

Challenges associated with generic medicines include:

1. **Underqualified Pharmacists:** In over-the-counter sales, underqualified salespersons may decide which generic medicine to dispense.
2. **Negation of Doctor's Experience:** Prescribing doctors may not have the freedom to specify a preferred brand based on their experience and faith in its quality.
3. **Lack of Quality Compliance:** There is a lack of coordination in ensuring quality compliance between manufacturers, pharmaceutical networks, and price control authorities.
4. **Prevalence of Substandard Drugs:** There is a prevalence of spurious and substandard quality medicines, with a rate of 3-4%, whereas all drugs should ideally be 100% quality-tested.
5. **Profit Considerations:** Underqualified staff at retail stores may prioritize generic brands based on profit rather than quality.

Recommendations for improvement include:

1. **No Compromise on Quality:** Governments should ensure the quality of medicines through periodic testing.
2. **Case Study Approach:** Implementing a case study approach, such as in Tamil Nadu, where medicines are kept under quarantine until double-blinded samples are cleared in quality testing.
3. **Allow Recommendation of Generic Brand:** Until quality assurance is ensured, doctors should be allowed to recommend specific generic brands they trust.

Reforms to improve access to affordable medicines in India:

1. **Availability of Essential Medicines:** Ensuring a high availability rate (above 90%) of essential medicines, despite low profit margins.
2. **Banning Unscientific Medicine Combinations:** Implementing a ban on unscientific combinations of medicines.
3. **Expanding Janaushadhi Kendras:** Expanding the network of Janaushadhi Kendras to provide free medicines and diagnostics under Universal Health Care.
4. **Fixing Profit Margins:** Establishing fixed percentage profit margins for wholesale agents and retailers to ensure affordability.