

EDITORIALS – 5TH SEP 2026

1. OUT OF NEGLECT BIN (GS Paper I Society)

This editorial 'Out of neglect bin' was published in The Hindu on 5th Sep 2026, highlights the significance of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka's menopause policies in integrating midlife women's health into routine public care.

Policy Significance and Health Context

- Women's health care remains reproductive-age focused, leaving those with severe menopausal symptoms underserved and often compelled to endure them without treatment.
- Tamil Nadu and Karnataka's policies bring women's physical needs and mental health during perimenopause and menopause into routine government care.
- Tamil Nadu's perimenopausal policy, announced on August 17, provides early identification, screening, counselling and treatment through primary and higher health centres.
- Karnataka's 'Ruthu Thare', introduced on August 4 as the country's first dedicated women's health policy, strongly focuses on perimenopause and menopause.
- Menopause is confirmed after 12 consecutive months without menstruation, while perimenopause involves declining oestrogen and progesterone levels over several years.
- Common symptoms include hot flashes, sleep trouble, mood changes, joint pain and fatigue, which may cause substantial physical discomfort and daily disruption.

Delivery and Implementation Challenges

- Both States propose community screening, women's clinics, district-level facilities, outreach and referrals to government hospitals and medical colleges.
- Although the policies give institutional legitimacy to menopausal complaints, their impact will depend on effective ground-level implementation.
- Since menopausal symptoms often lack adequate medical attention, sustained professional sensitisation and public awareness among women and their families are essential.

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Socio-economic Consequences of Neglected Menopause Care

- Productivity loss: A 2026 study of 280 employed women in southern India found moderate-to-severe symptoms in 73.2%, with fatigue and sleep problems reducing work ability.
- Income erosion: Canada's 2023 menopause report estimated C\$3.3 billion in women's lost income and approximately 540,000 lost working days annually due to unmanaged symptoms.
- Premature retirement: An Australian parliamentary inquiry found that menopause-related workforce exit can reduce retirement savings and increase women's financial dependence on partners or families.
- Occupational inequality: The southern India study recorded the highest symptom burden among unskilled workers, showing how physically demanding and low-autonomy employment magnifies menopausal disadvantages.
- Workplace discrimination: Britain's equality regulator clarified that severe, long-term menopausal symptoms may qualify as a disability, requiring employers to provide reasonable workplace adjustments.
- Hidden health burden: The World Health Organization notes that menopause is rarely discussed within families, workplaces or health systems, while routine diagnosis and counselling remain unavailable in many countries.
- Healthy-ageing costs: Menopause-related bone loss and rising cardiovascular risks can increase long-term disability, household medical expenditure and pressure on public health systems.

2. A BIT OF A RESET, WITH A WIDER DEBATE (GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'A BIT of a reset, with a wider debate' was published in The Hindu on 5th Sep 2026, highlights the need for substantive reform and democratic consultation while revising India's model bilateral investment treaty.

Background and Limitations of the 2015 Model

- India is revising its model BIT, adopted in 2015 after foreign investors initiated treaty-breach claims, prompting termination of existing BITs and fresh negotiations.
- India has concluded only a handful of treaties based on the 2015 model, exposing its limited acceptance among capital-exporting countries and foreign investors.

- Investment treaties must balance investor protection with the state's regulatory autonomy, but the 2015 model tilts heavily towards the latter.
- Concerns over high regulatory risks, weak governance and judicial delays have prompted India to reconsider the model and restore greater treaty balance.
- While proposed changes address international arbitration, substantive investor protection and investment facilitation, procedural reform has received limited attention.

Democratic Deficit in Treaty-Making

- Investment treaties affect citizens and invoke the all-affected principle, requiring meaningful participation through elected representatives or civil society organisations.
- Executive-led negotiations behind closed doors create a democratic deficit through inadequate parliamentary supervision and limited external consultation.
- The United Kingdom and Australia require treaties to reach Parliament, while Norway and Colombia have subjected model BIT drafts to public consultation.
- India similarly released its draft model BIT for comments in March 2015, after which the Law Commission of India proposed improvements in its 260th Report; the final version adopted in December accepted only some recommendations.

Consultative Revision Process

- An independent expert group comprising international lawyers, economists, researchers and think tanks should guide the government through specialised scrutiny.
- Industry bodies, arbitrators, law firms and civil society organisations should provide stakeholder inputs before preparation of the revised draft.
- The draft should undergo public consultation and parliamentary discussion, including scrutiny by relevant department-related committees.
- Consultation must uphold participatory democracy, not become a box-ticking exercise, and should meaningfully engage with dissenting views.

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Federal Implications of BIT Obligations

- Subnational exposure: The RAKIA dispute arose after Andhra Pradesh cancelled authorisation for a bauxite-supply agreement, triggering a US\$273 million claim against India under the India-UAE BIT.

- Treaty responsibility: Although Andhra Pradesh's actions caused the RAKIA dispute, proceedings were initiated against the Republic of India, illustrating the Union's exposure to State decisions.
- Constitutional overlap: Land acquisition, mining approvals, electricity regulation and industrial permissions largely involve States, allowing routine subnational decisions to acquire international investment-law consequences.
- National-treatment obligation: Article 4.2 of India's 2015 Model BIT expressly extends national-treatment requirements to State governments and Union Territory administrations.
- Local-government gap: India's Model BIT excludes local-government measures, although *Metalclad v. Mexico* showed how a municipal permit dispute could generate substantial international liability.
- Fiscal risk: A parliamentary committee recorded 37 investment-dispute notices against India and noted that even the single paid arbitral award imposed significant costs on the exchequer.
- Capacity asymmetry: The committee identified inadequate domestic investment-law expertise, supporting specialised training for Union and State officials whose regulatory decisions may trigger BIT disputes.

3. LET'S HOLD OUR TEACHERS IN THE HIGHEST ESTEEM. THEY HELP INDIA LEARN AND LEAD

(GS Paper I Society)

This editorial 'Let's hold our teachers in the highest esteem. They help India learn and lead' was published in The Indian Express on 5th Sep 2026, highlights teachers' ethical, intellectual and nation-building role in shaping capable and responsible citizens.

Role and Ideals of Teachers

- Teachers shape destinies by imparting knowledge and skills while nurturing values, motivation and confidence to confront life's challenges.
- Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan wanted his birthday observed as Teachers' Day, while Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam wished to be remembered primarily as a teacher.
- The Taittiriya Upanishad's "Acharyadevo Bhava" reflects the civilisational ideal of respecting competent, patient and affectionate teachers.
- A teacher should treat students equally, protect their well-being and adapt instruction to their learning abilities without anger or discrimination.
- Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitram* defines a good teacher through both profound knowledge and the ability to communicate it effectively.

- The Sanskrit maxim *Sarvatra vijayam icchet, shishyat icchet parajayam* expresses a teacher's desire to see the student surpass the teacher.

Learning, Conduct and Responsibility

- Effective teaching develops independent thinking, curiosity, questioning, argumentation and judgement, enabling students to solve emerging challenges.
- Teaching is a sacred responsibility, extending beyond curriculum delivery to mentoring students as a friend, well-wisher and fellow traveller.
- The President's experiences at Sri Aurobindo Integral School and Rashtrapati Bhavan underline that teachers also learn from children's spontaneity, curiosity and ideas.
- Parents place immense trust in teachers, making student safety, dignity and holistic development central professional obligations.
- Teachers must avoid fear, anxiety and inferiority among children, instead helping them become the best versions of themselves.
- A teacher succeeds when students achieve prosperity while retaining ethical conduct and concern for collective well-being.

Teachers in Nation-Building

- India's development requires teachers to cultivate respect for cultural heritage, scientific outlook, humanity, environmental protection and national unity.
- Dedicated teachers can advance social inclusion and prepare generations committed to innovation, collective excellence and the spirit of "Nation First".

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Structural Challenges Facing the Teaching Profession

- Deployment imbalance: Despite having 1.03 crore teachers, India still had 1,00,843 single-teacher schools in 2025-26, revealing severe geographical and institutional disparities.
- Misleading averages: India's overall pupil-teacher ratio improved to 24:1 in 2025-26, but this national average conceals shortages in rural, single-teacher and subject-specific classrooms.
- Recruitment pressure: Bihar's 2026 Teacher Recruitment Examination proposed filling 32,388 government-school posts, illustrating the continuing scale of State-level staffing requirements.
- Non-teaching workload: Section 27 of the Right to Education Act permits deployment only for the decennial census, disaster relief and elections, yet such duties still reduce classroom time.

- Training quality: The National Education Policy 2020 recommends 50 annual hours of professional development, but standardised programmes may become compliance exercises without relevant pedagogy and follow-up support.
- Digital constraints: UDISE+ 2025-26 recorded computers in 69.9% of schools and internet connectivity in 67.4%, limiting the uniform adoption of technology-enabled teaching.
- Employment insecurity: UNESCO's *No Teacher, No Class* report highlighted poor service conditions and recommended improving teachers' employment terms across public and private schools.