Polity & Governance · GS - II

Discuss how the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971, seeks to balance women's reproductive rights with medical and legal safeguards. What challenges hinder access to safe and timely abortion services in India?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 14/10/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

MTP Act 1971, MTP Amendment Act 2021, reproductive autonomy, right to privacy, Article 21, legal abortion, role of registered medical practitioners, gestational limits, judicial intervention, doctors' reluctance, social stigma, rural healthcare gaps, informed consent, confidentiality, access to safe abortion.

Model Answer

1. Introduction

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971, as amended in 2021, provides a legal framework for abortion in India. It seeks to protect women's health while prescribing conditions for safe and lawful termination of pregnancy.

2. Balancing Rights and Safeguards

- **Reproductive autonomy:** Access to safe abortion is closely linked to dignity, bodily autonomy and privacy under Article 21.
- **Medical safeguards:** The Act specifies gestational limits, medical opinions and conditions under which termination is permitted.
- **Confidentiality:** Section 5A protects the identity and personal details of women undergoing termination, subject to lawful exceptions.

3. Challenges in Implementation

- Doctors may demand unnecessary court orders due to fear of legal consequences.
- Social stigma and inadequate awareness discourage women from seeking care.
- Shortages of trained providers and facilities create barriers, particularly in rural areas.
- Delays can increase medical risks and emotional distress.

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4. Measures Required

Clear clinical guidelines, legal awareness among medical professionals, adequate trained staff, confidential services and accessible grievance-redressal mechanisms can improve implementation.

5. Conclusion

Effective implementation of the MTP Act requires a rights-based, medically safe and timely approach that protects women’s dignity while ensuring compliance with the law.