

# January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Sample Current Affairs

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## **1. Breaking barriers: on two women's Sabarimala temple entry**

- Why has the issue become so political?
- Why are women of a certain age not allowed to enter Sabarimala?
- What does the court ruling upheld in case of Sabarimala case?
- Why does preventing women's entry to the temple discriminatory in nature?

**GS paper 1 ( Issues related to women )**

**In this video, you can find detailed answers for all the above questions.**

**The above article has been retrieved from:**

N.A. ( 2019,  
January , 6). Breaking barriers: on two women's Sabarimala  
temple entry. The Hindu. Retrieved from  
<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/breaking-barriers/article25902898.ece>

### **What is the context about?**

- Violent protests have paralysed the southern Indian state of Kerala after two women made history by entering a prominent Hindu temple.
- On Wednesday, Bindu Ammini, 40, and Kanaka Durga, 39, entered the shrine around dawn and became the first women to do so.

- ❑ This is the first time women of menstruating age have made their way into the shrine after a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in September 2018 threw the temple open to women of all ages.



### Why has the issue become so political?

- ❑ Right-wing groups, supported by India's ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), demanded a state-wide shutdown.
- ❑ The state government, which supports the Supreme Court ruling, stepped up security and deployed police across the state for protection.
- ❑ The issue has become increasingly contentious in the run-up to India's general election, scheduled for April and May. Critics have accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of pursuing a religiously divisive agenda to court the BJP's mostly-Hindu support base.

### Why are women of a certain age not allowed to enter Sabarimala?

- ❑ The Supreme Court decision to let women worship at the Sabarimala shrine came after a petition argued that the custom banning them violated gender equality.
- ❑ Hinduism regards menstruating women as unclean and bars them from participating in religious rituals - but most temples allow women to enter as long as they are not menstruating, rather than banning women in a broad age group from entering at all.
- ❑ Protesters have consistently argued that the court ruling goes against the wishes of the temple's deity, Lord Ayyappa.
- ❑ They say that the ban on women entering Sabarimala is not about menstruation alone - it is also in keeping with the wish of the deity, who is believed to have laid down clear rules about the pilgrimage to seek his blessings.
- ❑ According to the temple's mythology, Lord Ayyappa is an avowed bachelor who has taken an oath of celibacy and hence, women of a certain age are not allowed into the temple.

### **What does the court ruling upheld in case of Sabarimala case?**

The SC in recent judgement has struck down this ban and throw open the temple for women of all age groups.

The court ruling is triumph of constitutional morality because :-

- ❑ The prohibition of women due to their physiology is based on the paternalistic mind-set of the society and is against the right of equality enshrined under article 14
- ❑ The constitution allows all to practise the religion of their choice but in Sabarimala by refusing entry of women the temple board is taking away their fundamental right given under article 25
- ❑ The practise is based on the notion of purity and impurity and thus a form of untouchability which is prohibited under the Article 17 of the constitution which is a regressive social practise .
- ❑ It also confers that prohibition of women entry cannot be constituted as an essential practise of religion and thus individual rights under article 25 are given precedence over group rights under article 26 thus making society more liberal.

### **Why does preventing women's entry to the temple discriminatory in nature?**

Preventing women's entry to the Sabarimala temple with an irrational and obsolete notion of "purity" clearly offends the equality clauses in the Constitution. In any civilised society, gender equality is to be treated as one of the core values.

- ✓ It denotes a patriarchal and partisan approach.
- ✓ The entry prohibition takes away the woman's right against discrimination guaranteed under Article 15(1) of the Constitution.

- ✓ It curtails her religious freedom assured by Article 25(1).
- ✓ Prohibition of women's entry to the shrine solely on the basis of womanhood and the biological features associated with womanhood is derogatory to women, which Article 51A (e) aims to renounce.
- ✓ The classification based on age is an act of discrimination based on sex.