

## Important Vocab For the Editorial

1. **sexism** (noun) – chauvinism, discrimination, prejudice, bias (against women).
2. **combat** (verb) – fight, battle against, counter/oppose.
3. **the likes of** (phrase) – someone considered as a type.
4. **silence** (verb) – suppress, reduce, tone down.
5. **push through** (phrasal verb) – succeed in passing a law accepted by the people who oppose it.
6. **scrutiny** (noun) – observation, inspection, examination.
7. **dissent** (noun) – disagreement, disapproval, opposition.
8. **the nitty-gritty** (noun) – basics, essentials, main point.
9. **overshadow** (verb) – conceal, obscure, outshine/eclipse.
10. **couplet** (noun) – stanza, two lines of poetry (with same rhyme & length).
11. **digress** (verb) – deviate, turn away, get off the subject/topic.
12. **address** (verb) – talk to, give an address to, speak to.
13. **irony** (noun) – paradox, incongruity, peculiarity.
14. **be lost on** (phrase) – fail to be noticed by someone.
15. **quip** (verb) – joke, make a witty remark, banter.
16. **point out** (phrasal verb) – identify, recognize, designate.
17. **blot** (noun) – disgrace, dishonour, stigma.
18. **veteran** (noun) – (long-serving) expert, mature established/experienced person in an area of activity.
19. **no stranger to** (phrase) – accustomed to, familiar with, acquainted with/knowledgeable about.
20. **misogynist** (adjective) – relating to misogyny; anti-feminist, male chauvinist, male supremacist.
21. **pitch** (verb) – try to convince/persuade someone to accept something.
22. **set aside** (phrasal verb) – reserve, put aside, lay aside.
23. **odds** (noun) – (difficult/tough) probability, chances, conditions.
24. **cold storage** (noun) – temporary postponement of something.
25. **thwart** (verb) – stop, prevent, check/obstruct/impede.
26. **appropriate** (verb) – allocate, assign,/allot, earmark/set apart/set aside.
27. **stand-in** (noun) – substitute, representative, reserve/replacement.
28. **hold true** (phrase) – remain true or valid.
29. **overwhelming** (adjective) – massive/huge, sweeping/decisive, total/complete.
30. **lip-service** (noun) – a method of expressing approval/support without taking any significant action.
31. **prejudice** (noun) – bias, intolerance, discrimination.
32. **chauvinistic** (adjective) – jingoistic, strong nationalist, super patriotic.

## Sexism in Parliament: On Azam Khan's remarks in the Lok Sabha

### India needs more women in legislatures to combat the likes of Azam Khan

The triple talaq bill was **passed in the Lok Sabha on July 25**, silencing Opposition voices that the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2019 should not be

pushed through in a hurry, and without scrutiny. But the dissent on the nitty-gritty of the bill was overshadowed by the [sexist remarks made by Samajwadi Party MP Azam Khan](#), directed against Bharatiya Janata Party member Rama Devi who was in the Chair. Referring to an intervention by Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Mr. Khan quoted a couplet, “... *tu idhar-udhar ki na baat kar* (do not digress).” When Ms. Devi asked Mr. Khan to address the Chair, he made an “objectionable” statement, marking a new parliamentary low. The irony that this was said while the House was discussing an issue concerning women was not lost on Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who quipped: “Don’t politicise an issue that affects women.” Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani pointed out that Mr. Khan’s comment was a “blot on all legislators including men”. Mr. Khan, a veteran from the Uttar Pradesh Assembly but a first-time MP who is no stranger to controversy, was banned from campaigning for 72 hours in the recent Lok Sabha polls after his misogynist remarks against BJP candidate Jaya Prada. While Mr. Khan has been asked to apologise to the House, some women members have renewed the pitch for the passage of the women’s reservation bill.

The 17th Lok Sabha has the [highest number of women MPs](#), 78, comprising 14.39% of the House. This is higher than 2014 and a long way from the first election in 1951-52, when they made up only 5% of the House. The global average stands at 24.6%, and neighbours Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal have quotas for women in Parliament. In India, the women’s reservation bill or the Constitution (108th) Amendment Bill to set aside one-third of seats in Parliament and State Assemblies for women was passed in the Rajya Sabha in March 2010. However, the Bill couldn’t overcome odds and the opposition in the Lok Sabha and went into cold storage. Critics have cited several reasons behind the bill being thwarted, not least that the quota for women would be appropriated by powerful stand-ins. But this could hold true for men as well. The Bharatiya Janata Party, which has an overwhelming majority in the Lok Sabha (303 of 543 seats) and has rushed through more than a dozen bills in this session, must take the lead. Slogans such as ‘Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao’ will sound like mere lip-service if political parties don’t speak out against gender prejudice. Women must have greater political representation in decision-making bodies as a first step towards changing chauvinistic mindsets, and Parliament needs to show the way.