Republicans' Opposition to Critical Race Theory - U.S.

Why in news?

Many state legislatures in the U.S. controlled by the Republican party are passing laws against the 'critical race theory.'

What is the critical race theory?

- Critical race theory (CRT) is a way of thinking about America's history through the lens of racism.
- It is an approach to grappling with a history of White supremacy.
- It began as a left-wing academic discussion in the 1970s and 1980s.
- These scholars were studying the lack of racial progress following the passing of landmark civil rights laws in the decade preceding.
- The CRT acknowledges that systemic racism is still part of the country's society.
- **Key ideas** - Race is culturally invented, not biological.
- Racism maintains the dominance of affluent White people.
- So, many are not interested in doing away with it.
- And so, racism is an everyday experience for most people of colour in the US.
- Laws and institutions have, for years, promoted racial inequality.
- The CRT thus attends to law's role in establishing the rights and privileges.

Why do the Republicans oppose CRT?

- The CRT kept expanding slowly in academic journals and books over the decades.
- But it became suddenly exposed to a large audience after the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor by police.
- [Breonna Taylor, a Black medical worker, was shot and killed by Louisville police officers in March 2020 during a raid on her apartment.]
- These events sparked nationwide protests and discussions on racism.
- The following debates around CRT angered many conservatives, who saw it as an attempt to rewrite American history.
- Trump too lashed out against the educational curriculum teaching the impact of slavery in the US as "revisionist history" and "a crusade against American history".

What are the recent moves?

- Eight Republican-ruled states have passed laws or brought administrative actions to limit how CRT or related concepts can be taught in the classroom.
- As many as 25 states have considered laws or steps to restrict how race and racism can be taught.
- Republican senators introduced a resolution that condemns the practice of requiring teachers to receive Critical Race Theory education.

What are the concerns?

- There is little to no evidence that CRT is being taught in America's kindergarten to 12th grade public school system.
- But many schools do teach ideas central to CRT, such as the impact of slavery on the country.
- So, the laws passed against CRT would end up curtailing all discussions on racism in schools.
- It could lead to a whitewashing of American history.
- It is much a continuation of the decades-long opposition to gains from the civil rights movement.
- The coordinated action now by the conservatives could undermine the national conversation on race that had gained momentum in the recent years.

Source: The Indian Express

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