

From Slogans to Reality: Are Women in India Truly Empowered?

“Empowering women is a prerequisite for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, a society with stability is assured. Empowerment of women is essential as their value system leads to the development of a good family, society and ultimately a good nation.”

– Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam.



Context:


- Every year on **March 8, Women's Day** is observed and this year, it falls on Saturday.
- **International Women's Day** in 2025 will have the theme "**For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.**"
- In order to achieve a feminist future in which **all people are treated equally**, this year's theme urges action to **unlock equal rights, power, and opportunities for women.**



1. What is the historical status of women in India?

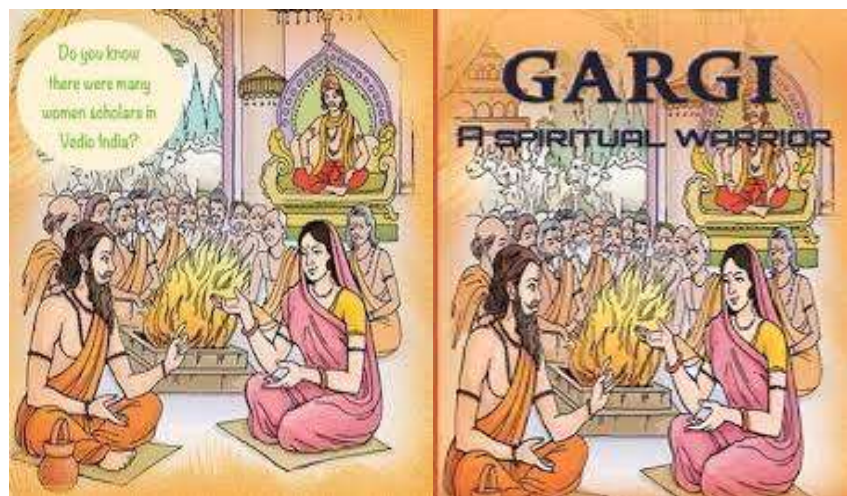
Gender Sensitization in Ancient Period			
Vedic	Epic	Smriti	Sanskrit
Equal right and status	Women were respected honour and righteous	Obedient meet and shy personality	NI
NI	Lower status and dignity in lower class	NI	NI



Dependency of women on male partner about marriage	Dependency of women on male partner about matter related to marriage	Dependency of female on male partner for all matter	Male dominance
Equality in education	Partial dependency in education and other affair	No freedom in any sphere	No freedom in any sphere
Subordinate position after marriage	Women honoured as idle wife	Inferior position	Equality in treatment in men and women regarding facility and resources
Helped each other in routine work	Active participation of women in social and religious function	No sacrifice allowed	NI
Birth of daughter was undesirable in global cast	NI	Religious ritual not allowed	NI
NI→ No Information available			


Time period	Analysis
<p>Ancient: 1.Vedic period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Aryans arrived in India between 3,000 BC and 2500 BC. • The Aryans defeated the matriarchal non-Aryan culture that existed in Indian society. • In the Vedic period, women had the right to education.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian society has always revered women with many female deities Saraswati, Durga, Lakshmi, Kali, etc worshiped across the country. • However, there were no oppressive practices such as child marriage and sati till the time of marriage, but women did not have the right to property.




- According to **Prof. Ram Ahuja**, “during this period, women were not earning money but **were seen working in the field of agriculture**. The woman used to **get her share of patrimony**. The **mother’s wealth was shared equally among the sons and daughters**.”
- Indian history finds mention of many prodigious women such as **Gargi, Maitreyi, and Sulabha**, whose faculty of reasoning was far superior to that of ordinary mortals.
- Similarly, there have been female rulers like **Prabhavatigupta, and Rani Durgavati** in various parts of our country.




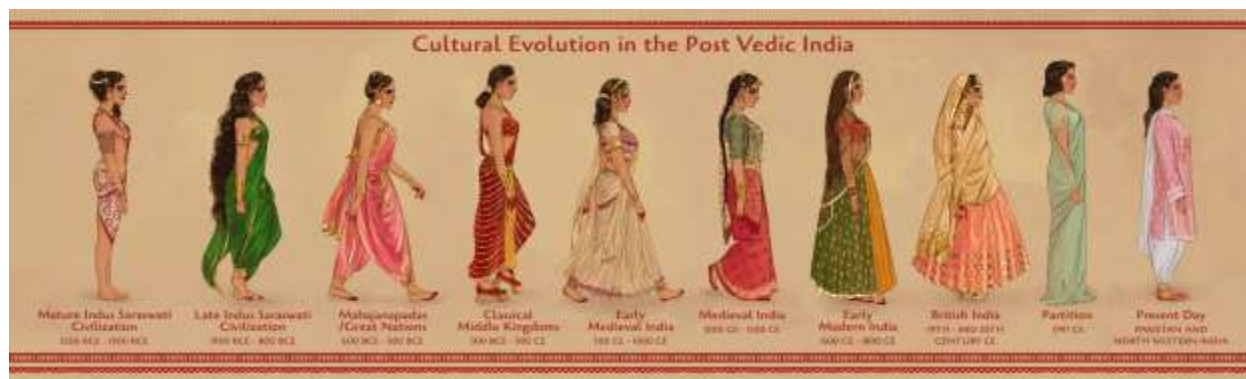
	<h2 style="text-align: center;">HINDU PHILOSOPHERS</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">ॐ</p> <p>Gargi and Maitreyi were two of the most significant Indian philosophers. They were renowned Brahnavadinis (knowledge of Brahma Vidya). They had prominent discussions with Sage Yajnavalkya about atman (soul).</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Gargi wrote many verses in the Rig Veda and was honored as one of the Navaratnas (nine gems) in King Janaka's court.</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Maitreyi was married to Sage Yajnavalkya and continued to pursue philosophy. She symbolizes intellectual Indian women.</p> </div> </div>
<p>2. Post Vedic Period</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The period from 1500 BC to 500 AD is known as the North Vedic period. • This period was a period of transition towards the status of women. • In the post-Vedic period, the status of women began to decline. • The level of female education in the Vedic period became very narrow in the post-Vedic period. The participation of women in public life became very narrow. • During this period, scriptures were composed to add religion to the inferior and secondary status of women.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women became ignorant, childish, and ignorant of religious practices, only a means of procreation and sexual gratification. • Different rules were made about the character of men and women.
Medieval period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, the period from 1200 to 1818 AD is considered as the medieval period. • During this period, Indian life was a life dominated by inequality, injustice, ignorance and based on scriptures. • The biggest victims of this caste system were women because women have a great responsibility to maintain the purity of the caste. • The practice of child marriage came into existence so that a girl should not have inter-caste marriage. • Widow Remarriage was banned so that widows should not have interracial marriages. • At the same time, the practice of sati came into existence. 

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the different cultures between Islam and Hinduism, efforts were made to protect Hinduism and women from Islam. • As a result, Hindu women were confined within four walls.
<p>Socio-Religious Reforms Movements (19th Century)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The beginning of organized efforts for the empowerment of women and gender equality in India can be traced back to the Socio-Religious Reforms Movements of the 19th century. <div data-bbox="558 808 1419 1287" data-label="Image"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts made by social reformers such as Raja Rammohan Roy, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and their related organizations helped the cause of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in India. (Sati Abolition Act of 1829, Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, Child Marriage Restraint Act (Sarda Act) of 1929, etc.) • Savitri Bai Phule worked towards women empowerment.

	
<p>Freedom Movement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gandhiji put particular emphasis on the collective mobilization and participation of women in India's freedom struggle. • He encouraged women to fight for political freedom as well as for their social and political rights. • While this participation of women in national movements was not directly aimed at questioning the patriarchal society, it helped the cause of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in India by:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generating a sense of self-confidence and a realization of their strength among women. ▪ Breaking away several barriers of old traditions and customs. 
<p>Post-Independence India</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-1970s, India witnessed a renewal of women empowerment and gender equality movement in India. • Widely known as the second phase of the Indian women's movement, prominent women's organizations took up a much wider range of initiatives, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in India, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) worked to improve conditions of women working in the unorganized sector. ▪ Annapurna Mahila Mandal (AMM) worked for the welfare of women and girl children.

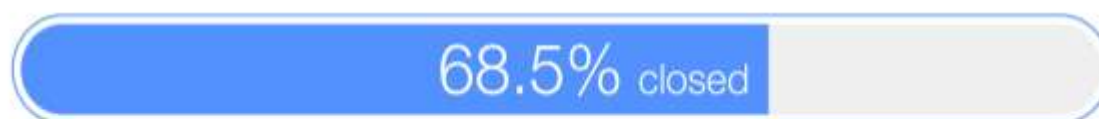


2. What is the status of women empowerment in India?

- India dropped to 129th place in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2024, while Iceland retained the top spot.
- This puts **India in the bottom 20 countries** on the index.
- India closed **64.1 per cent** of its gender gap in 2024, ranking the third lowest in the **southeast region**, **only ahead of Maldives and Pakistan**.
- Despite doing relatively well in the **political empowerment parameter (65th)** as compared to the other three indices, **India's overall rank is 129th, marginally lower than last year (127)**.

Global Gender Gap Report 2024

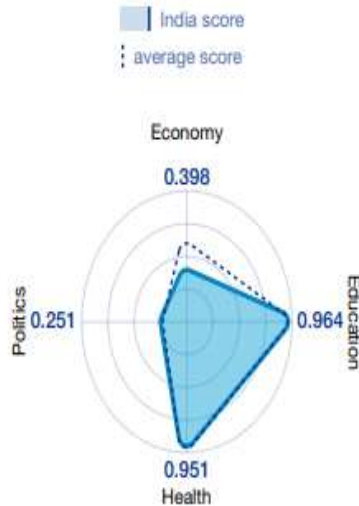
Global Gender Gap



The gender gap is narrowing, but the collective rate of progress has slowed down. Without a bold push forward, it will take **134 years** to reach full parity.

Economy Profile	Score (imparity = 0, parity = 1)	Rank (out of 146 countries)	Index Edition
India	0.641	129th	2024

Global Gender Gap Index 2024 Edition



Overview

Index and Subindex	2024		2023	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Global Gender Gap Index	0.641	129th	0.643	127th
Economic Participation and Opportunity	0.398	142nd	0.367	142nd
Educational Attainment	0.964	112th	1.000	26th
Health and Survival	0.951	142nd	0.950	142nd
Political Empowerment	0.251	65th	0.253	59th

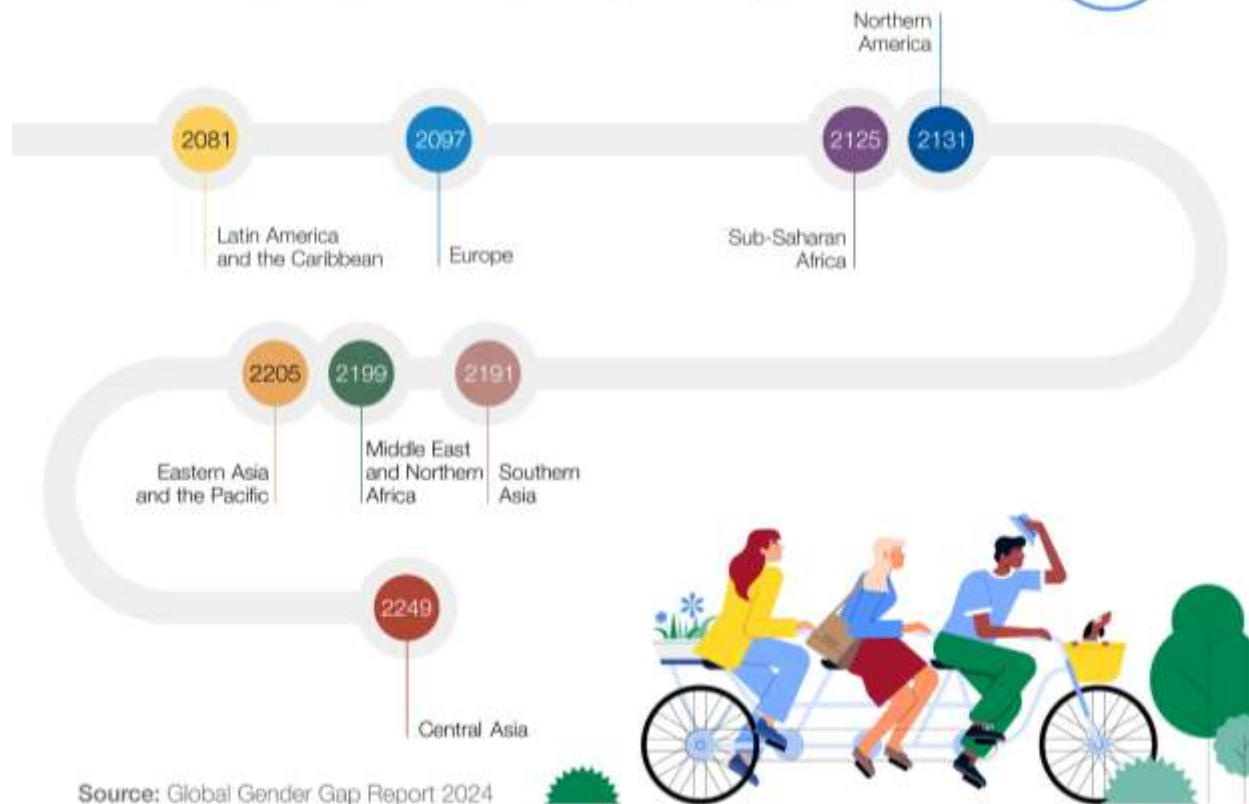
Global Gender Gap Report 2024

Generations to parity in regions



Global Gender Gap Report 2024

Year of projected parity in regions

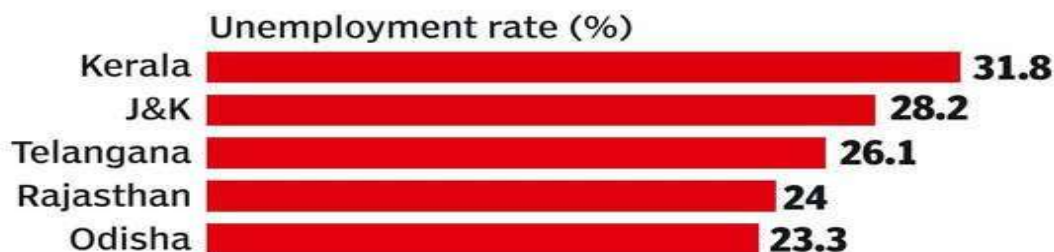


3. What is the status of women in the workforce in India?

- According to the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-2023**, the female labor force participation rate in India increased to **37.0% in 2023**, which is a **significant jump from 23.3% in 2017-18**.
- This is **attributed to the government's initiatives to empower women** through policies and legislations that focus on their **long-term socio-economic and political development**.

J&K TOPS IN FEMALE UNEMPLOYMENT

States with the **highest unemployment** rates in 15-29 years age group in Jan-Mar 2024



States with **lowest unemployment** rates



(Jan-Mar 2024)

High female unemployment rate

J& K	48.6
Kerala	46.6
Uttarakhand	39.4
Telangana	38.4
Himachal Pradesh	35.9

High male unemployment rate

Kerala	24.3
Bihar	21.2
Odisha	20.6
Rajasthan	20.6
Chhattisgarh	19.6

Low female unemployment rate

Delhi	5.7
Gujarat	10.9
Madhya Pradesh	13.5
Haryana	13.9
Karnataka	15

Low male unemployment rates

Delhi	2.5
Gujarat	8.5
Karnataka	10.1
Himachal Pradesh	10.2
Madhya Pradesh	11.7

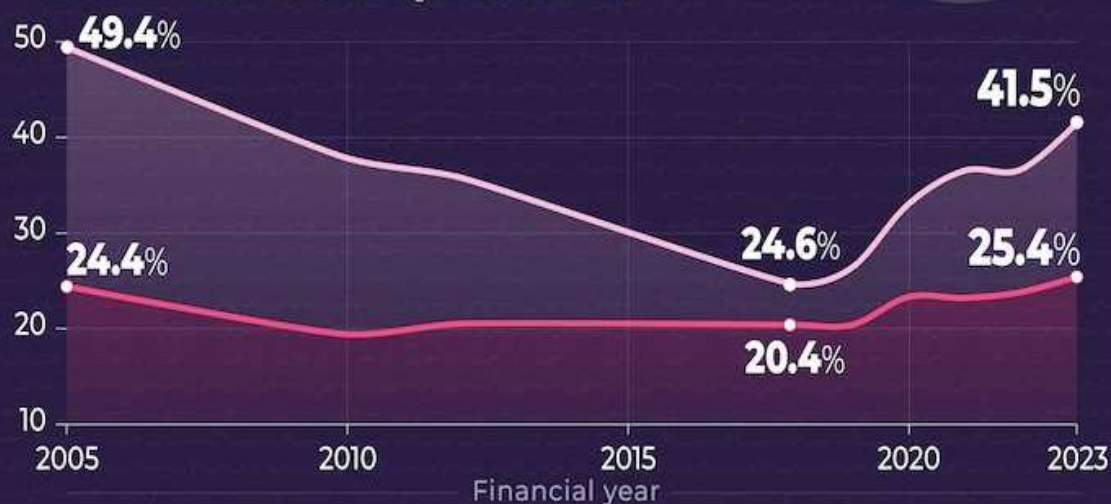
More Rural Women Return to Workforce than Urban Females

Female labour force participation in rural India recovered swiftly in the past five years; gradual increase for urban areas

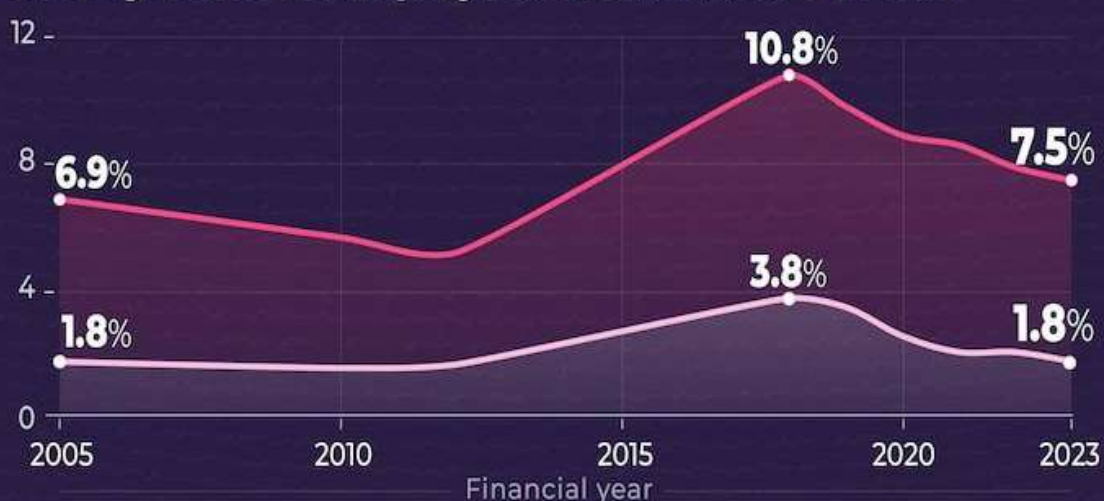


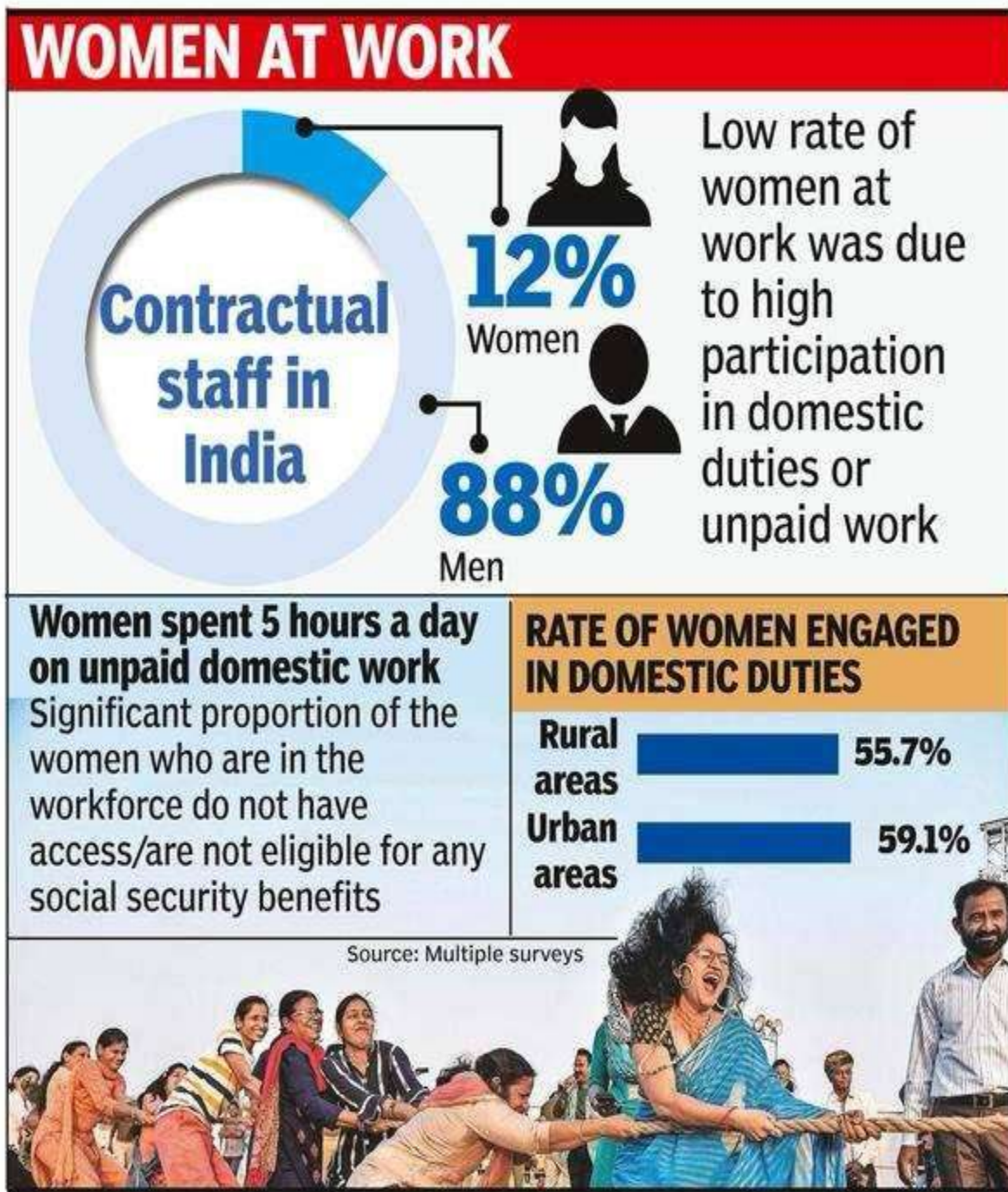
 Rural  Urban

Labour Force Participation Rate



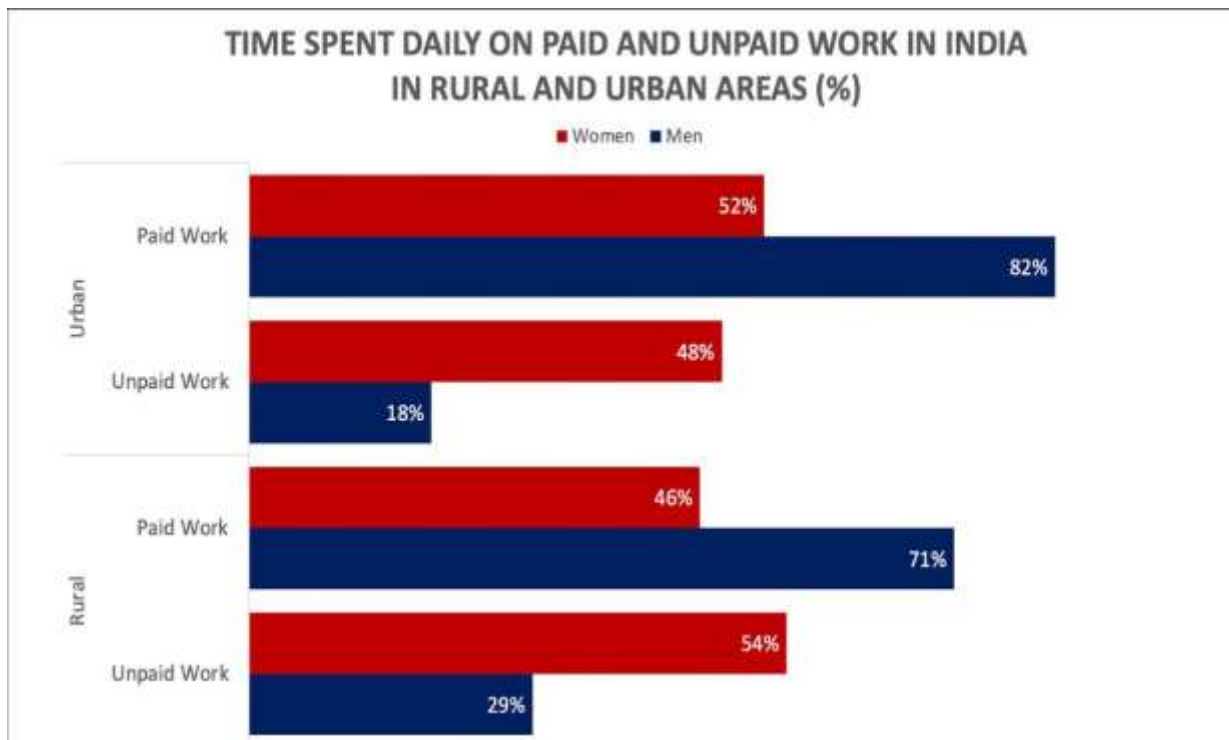
Steady fall in unemployment rate since FY 2018





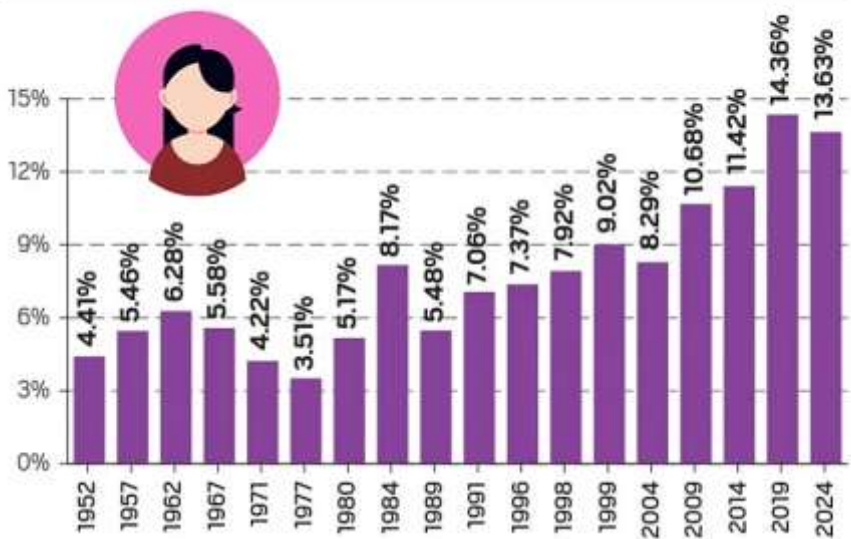
- According to the **State Bank of India's** latest report, if all the ladies doing their household chores for their family are paid for their job, then the amount paid to them would be equivalent to about **7.5 per cent of India's GDP**.

Contribution of Unpaid Women in GDP			
		Rural	Urban
Unpaid domestic work by women	Minutes	432	431
	Hour	7.2	7.2
Total Women (18-60 years)	in crore	28.7	13.2
Working age women		1.4	4.0
Unpaid women		27.3	9.3
Per day per hour wage*	in Rs	21	33
Total unpaid contribution	in Rs lakh crore	14.7	8.0
Total Rural + Urban Contribution (in Rs lakh crore)		22.7	
Total Rural + Urban Contribution (% of GDP)		7.5%	
Source: SBI Research; *Assuming monthly wage of Rs 5000 & Rs 8000 in rural and urban areas for 8 hours, respectively			

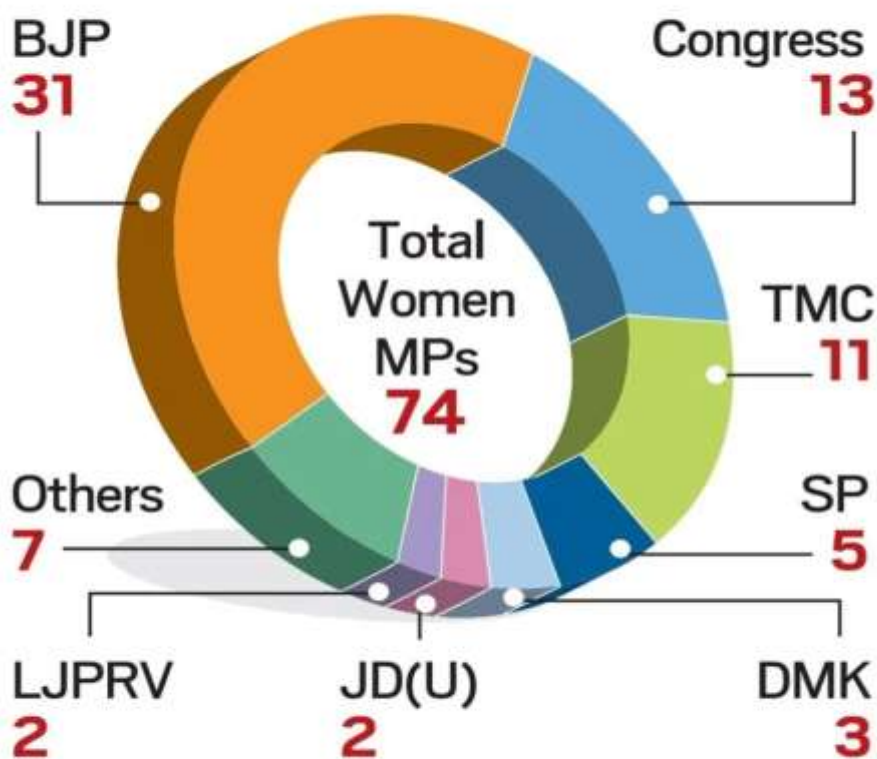


- A 2018 report by Mckinsey Global Institute showed that women's contribution to India's economy is very low at 18 per cent, while it is 41 per cent in China, 40 per cent in Vietnam, 33 per cent in Japan, and 29 per cent in Sri Lanka.
- According to the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj it is estimated that the GDP of India would increase by 43 per cent if women had the same work participation rate as men.

4. What is the current status of women in various sectors?

Sectors	Status																																						
Women in Parliament	<p>CHANGE IN WOMEN'S STRENGTH IN LOK SABHA OVER THE YEARS</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1952</td><td>4.41%</td></tr> <tr><td>1957</td><td>5.46%</td></tr> <tr><td>1962</td><td>6.28%</td></tr> <tr><td>1967</td><td>5.58%</td></tr> <tr><td>1971</td><td>4.22%</td></tr> <tr><td>1977</td><td>3.51%</td></tr> <tr><td>1980</td><td>5.17%</td></tr> <tr><td>1984</td><td>8.17%</td></tr> <tr><td>1989</td><td>5.48%</td></tr> <tr><td>1991</td><td>7.06%</td></tr> <tr><td>1996</td><td>7.37%</td></tr> <tr><td>1998</td><td>7.92%</td></tr> <tr><td>1999</td><td>9.02%</td></tr> <tr><td>2004</td><td>8.29%</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>10.68%</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>11.42%</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>14.36%</td></tr> <tr><td>2024</td><td>13.63%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	1952	4.41%	1957	5.46%	1962	6.28%	1967	5.58%	1971	4.22%	1977	3.51%	1980	5.17%	1984	8.17%	1989	5.48%	1991	7.06%	1996	7.37%	1998	7.92%	1999	9.02%	2004	8.29%	2009	10.68%	2014	11.42%	2019	14.36%	2024	13.63%
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PARTY WISE WOMEN LS MPs

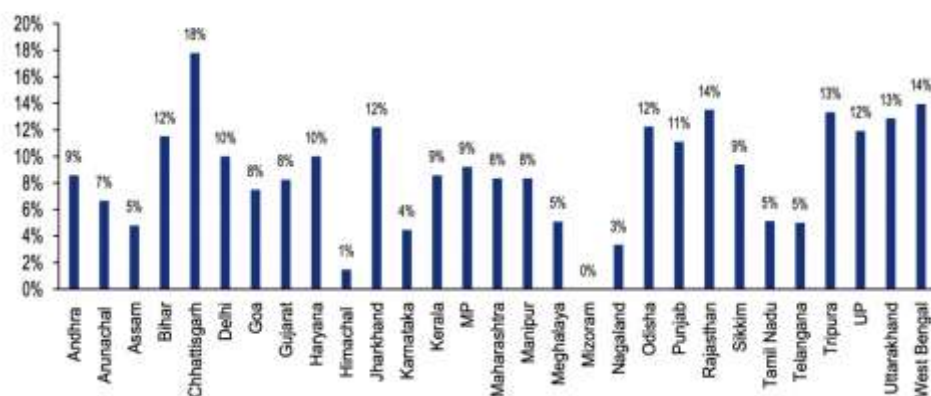


OTHERS: JMM, NCP (SP), RJD, SAD, Apna Dal, YSRCP, TDP won 1 seat each

Women in Legislative assembly

9% of MLAs are women

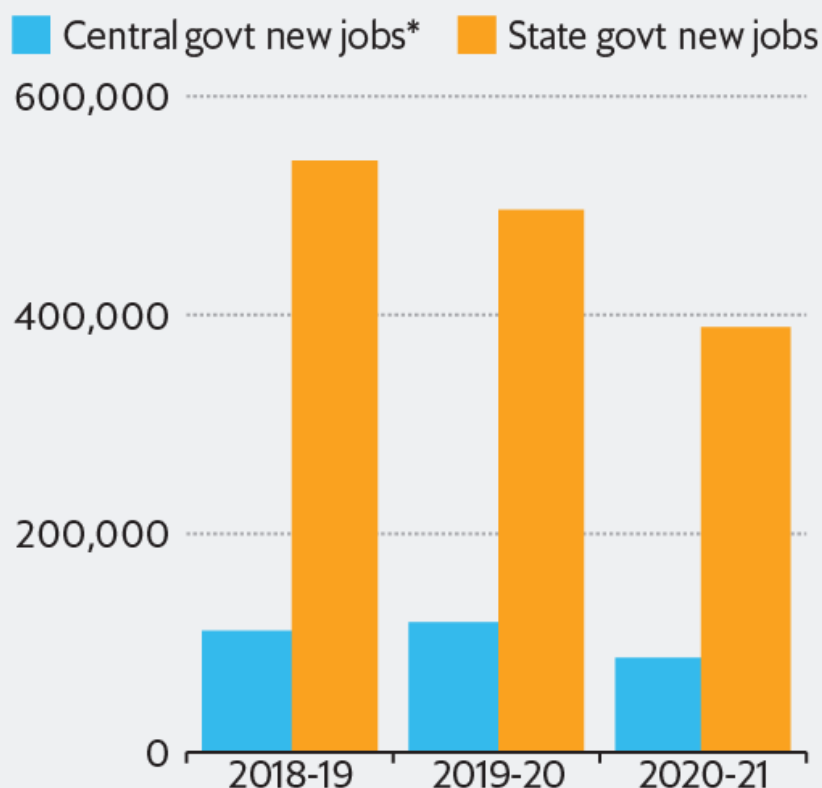
Percentage of women MLAs in State Assemblies






**Women in
Government
jobs**

Factors at play

The pandemic, a ban on creating new positions, and higher dependence on outsourced workers are behind the decline in govt hiring.



- **Top 3 All India Ranks** were achieved by **female candidates** in **UPSC Civil Services Examination 2021**.

	<div data-bbox="456 212 1414 884"> <h2>Another clean sweep</h2> <p>This was the second straight year that the UPSC results witnessed top three ranks going to women</p> <div data-bbox="496 426 1073 852">  <p>RANK #1 ISHITA KISHORE From Greater Noida, a graduate of economics, SRCC (DU)</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1101 426 1390 852"> <p>RANK #2 GARIMA LOHIA From Buxar, Bihar</p> <p>RANK #3 UMA HARATHI From Hyderabad</p> <p>RANK #4 SMRITI MISHRA From Noida</p> <p>RANK #5 MAYUR HAZARIKA From Tezpur, Assam</p> </div> </div>
<p>Women in Judiciary</p>	<div data-bbox="456 930 1414 1812"> <h2>GENDER IMBALANCE IN JUDICIARY</h2> <div data-bbox="496 1041 1373 1535"> <p>  Female Judges  Male Judges </p> <div> <div> <p>9%</p> <p>Supreme Court</p> <p>91%</p> </div> <div> <p>11%</p> <p>High Courts</p> <p>89%</p> </div> <div> <p>27%</p> <p>Lower Courts</p> <p>71%</p> </div> </div> </div> <div data-bbox="496 1566 1373 1812"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In SC out of 25, male judges are 22 and only 3 female judges ➤ In 24 high courts, 605 male judges and 72 female judges out of a total working strength of 677 ➤ Out of 16,660 judges in lower courts, 12,023 are male and 4,487 female. 150 cases were unknown </div> </div>

Women in sports

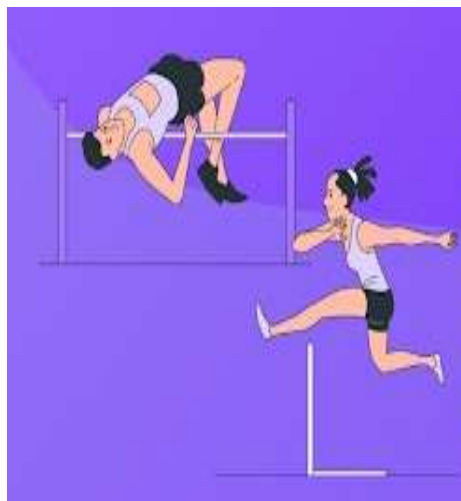
SALARY SLABS FOR INDIAN TEAM



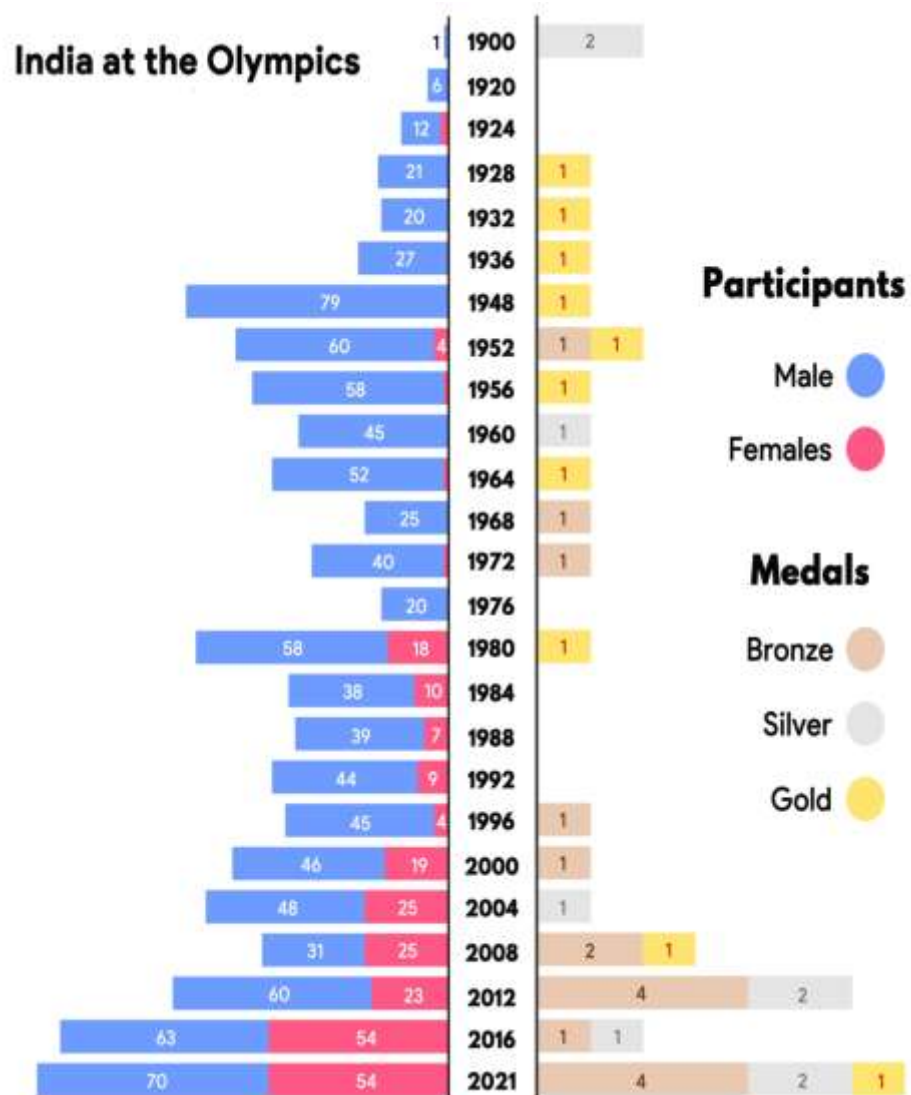
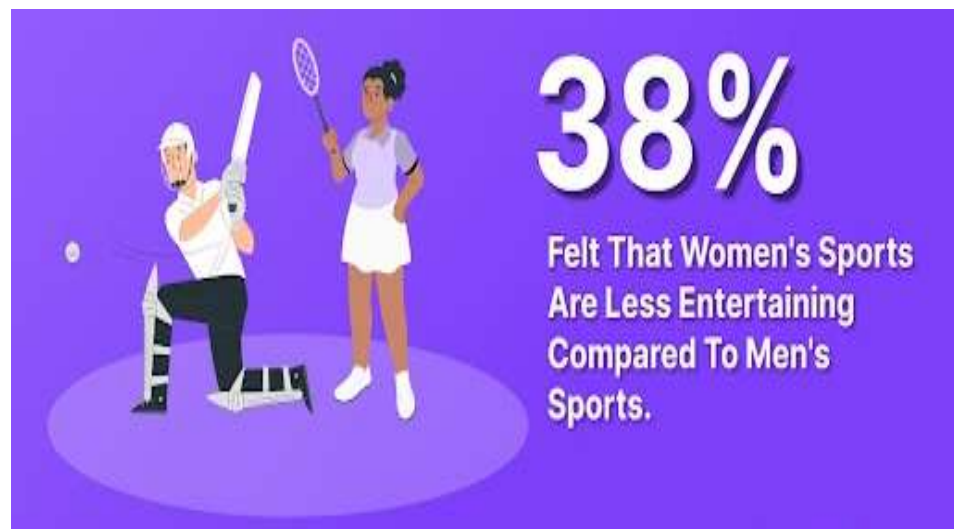
2019-2020 contracts	Men's	Women's
Grade A+	7 crore	NA
Grade A	5 crore	50 lakh
Grade B	3 crore	30 lakh
Grade C	1 crore	10 lakh

Attitudes Towards Women In Sports

BBC Indicates That **41%** Of Individuals View Female Athletes As Being On par With Their Male Counterparts In Terms Of Skill.



A Significant Portion Of Indians, Approximately, **1/3** Hold The Belief That Female Athletes Do Not Measure Up To Male Athletes.



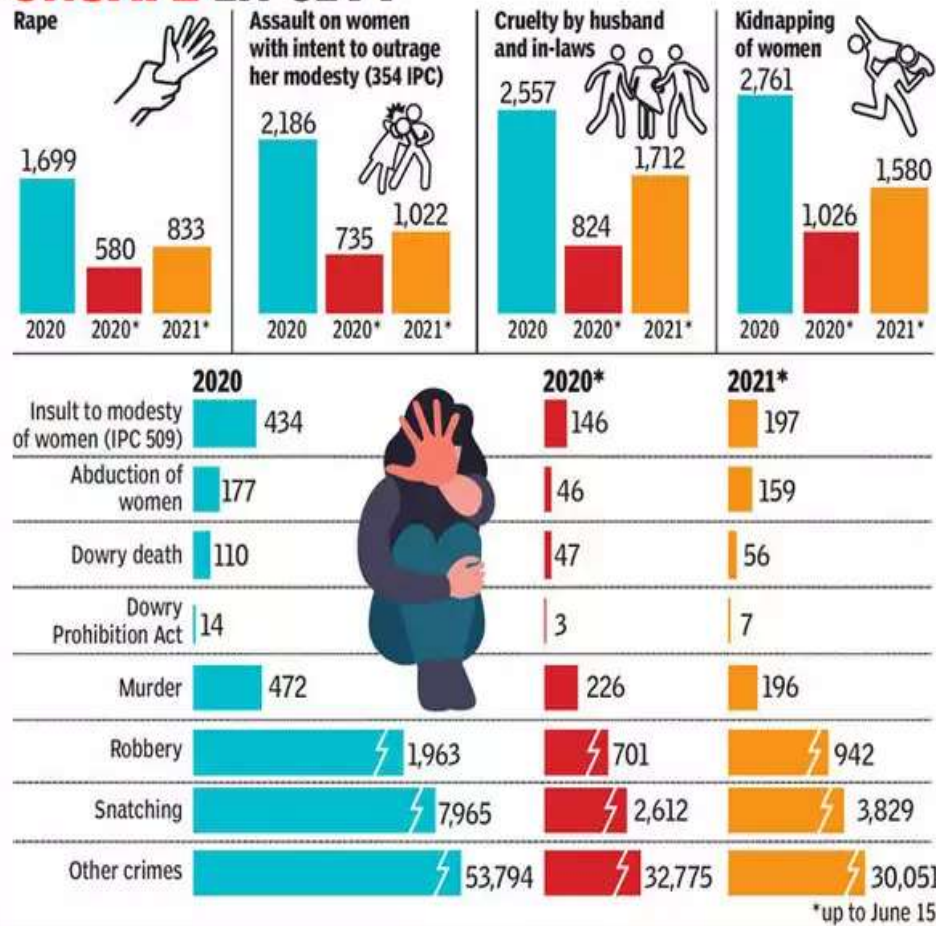
	<div><h3>MALE VS. FEMALE PROFESSIONAL SPORTS GAPS</h3><div><div>Salaries</div><div><div>100%</div><div>+15%</div></div></div><div><div>Biggest signing check in Football</div><div><div>€222 m</div><div>£250,000</div></div></div><div><div>Biggest salary per annum</div><div><div>\$130 m</div><div>\$518,000</div></div></div><div><div>The ATP prize pool</div><div><div>\$336,000</div><div>\$284,000</div></div></div><div><div>WTB prize pool</div><div><div>\$336,000</div><div>\$284,000</div></div></div><div><div>Rookie NBA</div><div><div>\$900,000</div><div>\$50,000</div></div></div><div><div>Rookie WNA</div><div><div>\$900,000</div><div>\$50,000</div></div></div><div><div>FIFA World Cup prize</div><div><div>400 million</div><div>60 million</div></div></div></div>
Women in corporates	<div><h3>GENDER PAY GAP STILL HIGH IN INDIA</h3><div><div><div>Women execs earn ₹85 for every ₹100 earned by men</div><div><div>₹1.91 crore</div><div>average compensation paid to women executives stood against ₹2.24 crore earned by their male counterparts.</div></div></div><div><div>7%</div><div>Women representation in senior management of organisations</div></div><div><div>5%</div><div>Women representation at the top management level</div></div><div><div>21 organisations out of the 200 have only one woman in top management</div></div><div><div>76 companies don't have a single woman in top management</div></div></div></div>

	<p>Working women <i>India's women are among the least likely to be part of the labour force</i></p> <p>Female participation rate in the labour force</p> <p>2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHINA US WORLD INDIA 27% <p>Share of India's labour force, by sector</p> <p>Source: WSI</p>
Women in Financial Inclusion	<p>IN MINORITY</p> <p>917,717 2,523,805 36.36</p> <p>Total female accounts Total bank accounts Share (%)</p> <p>FINANCIAL DISPARITY (in ₹ trillion)</p> <p>39,00,593 187,42,311 20.81</p> <p>Money in accounts of females Total money in accounts Share (%)</p> <p>WORKFORCE DIVISION</p> <p>441,163 1,765,017 24.99</p> <p>Female employees Total employees Share (%)</p> <p>As of March 2023 Source: Men & Women Report, 2023</p>

5. What are social issues related to women?

Issues	Analysis																																
Crime against women	<p>CRIME AGAINST WOMEN</p> <p>3,59,849 CASES 2017 total, including both IPC & special/local laws. Up from 3,29,243 (2015) and 3,38,954 (2016).</p> <p>CRIME IN THE STATES (ALL INDIA: 3,59,849)</p> <table> <tr> <td>Uttar Pradesh</td><td>56,011</td></tr> <tr> <td>Maharashtra</td><td>31,979</td></tr> <tr> <td>West Bengal</td><td>30,992</td></tr> <tr> <td>Madhya Pradesh</td><td>29,788</td></tr> <tr> <td>Rajasthan</td><td>25,993</td></tr> </table> <p>CRIME RATE/LAKH WOMEN POPULATION (ALL INDIA: 57.9)</p> <table> <tr> <td>Assam</td><td>143.6</td></tr> <tr> <td>Delhi</td><td>133.3</td></tr> <tr> <td>Telangana</td><td>94.7</td></tr> <tr> <td>Odisha</td><td>94.5</td></tr> <tr> <td>Haryana</td><td>88.7</td></tr> </table> <p>IPC CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN 3,15,215 CASES (CRIME RATE 50.7/LAKH)</p> <p>CYBER CRIME AGAINST WOMEN 600 CASES (IT ACT ONLY)</p> <p>271 relating to publication of sexually explicit matter</p> <p>329 other cyber crimes</p> <p>4 TIMES Assam's cyber crime cases against women (IT Act only), compared to next highest Telangana</p> <table> <tr> <td>Assam</td><td>169</td></tr> <tr> <td>Telangana</td><td>39</td></tr> <tr> <td>Karnataka</td><td>34</td></tr> <tr> <td>Maharashtra</td><td>31</td></tr> <tr> <td>UP</td><td>28</td></tr> <tr> <td>Tamil Nadu</td><td>27</td></tr> </table> <p>MURDER WITH RAPE 223 CASES (227 WOMEN)</p> <p>12% Assam (27) 12% Maharashtra (26)</p> <p>29% UP (64) 9% MP (21)</p> <p>38% others</p> <p>Source: All graphics based on data in latest NCRB crime report</p>	Uttar Pradesh	56,011	Maharashtra	31,979	West Bengal	30,992	Madhya Pradesh	29,788	Rajasthan	25,993	Assam	143.6	Delhi	133.3	Telangana	94.7	Odisha	94.5	Haryana	88.7	Assam	169	Telangana	39	Karnataka	34	Maharashtra	31	UP	28	Tamil Nadu	27
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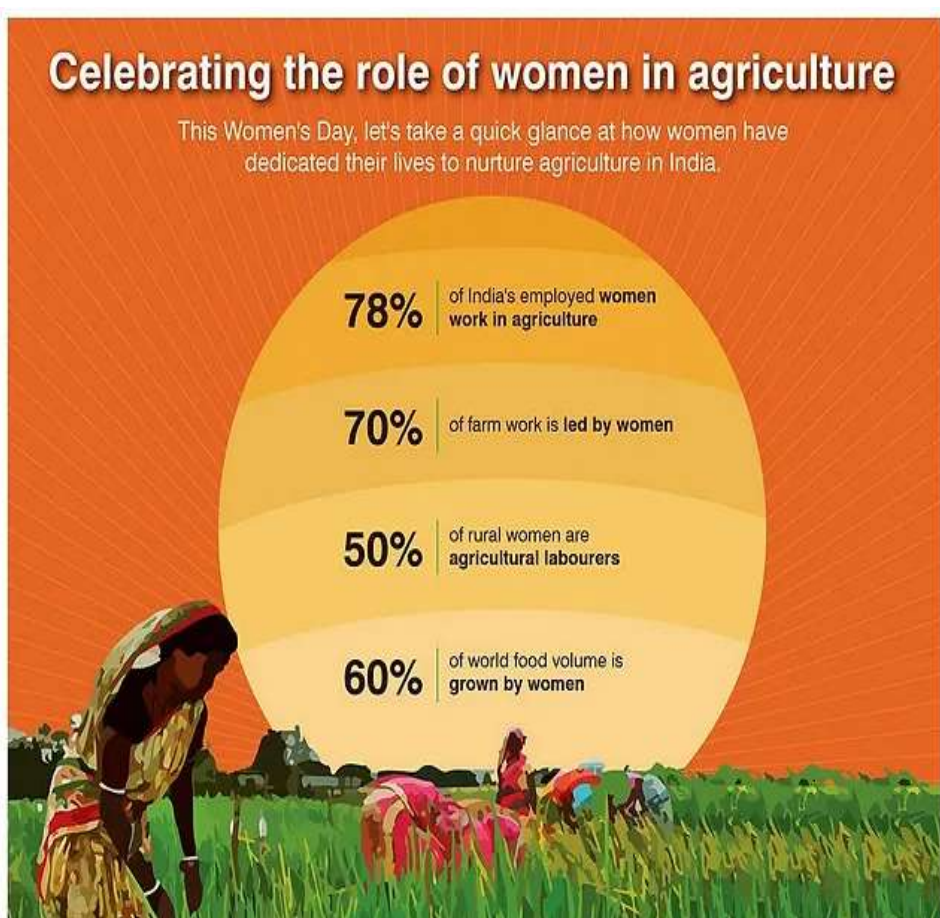
UNSAFE IN CITY



Domestic violence

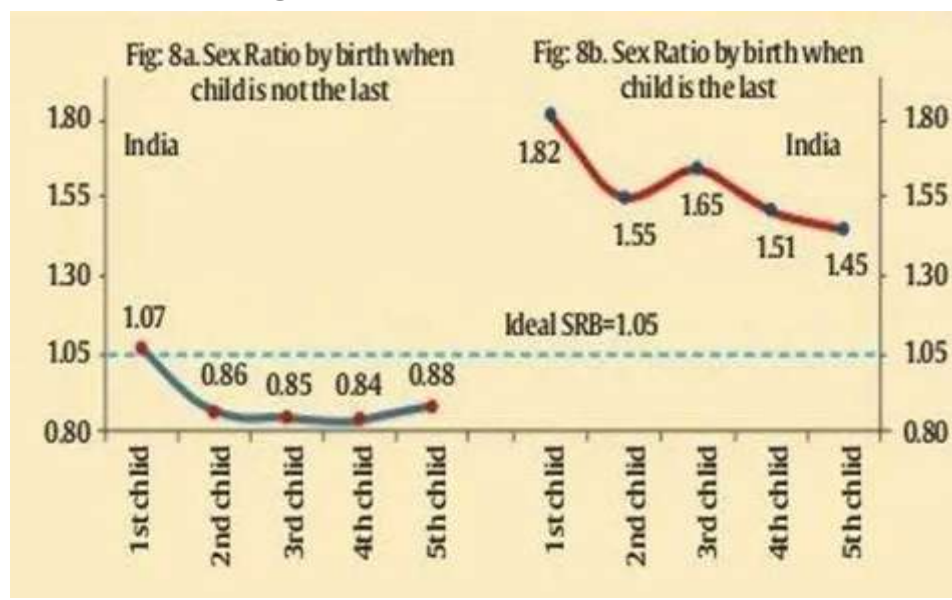
- The National Commission for Women said in 2020-21, it received **26,513** complaints from women, an **increase of 25.09 per cent**, compared with the 20,309 complaints registered in 2019-20.
- According to NFHS-4, **30% of women in India** have experienced **domestic violence at least once**.

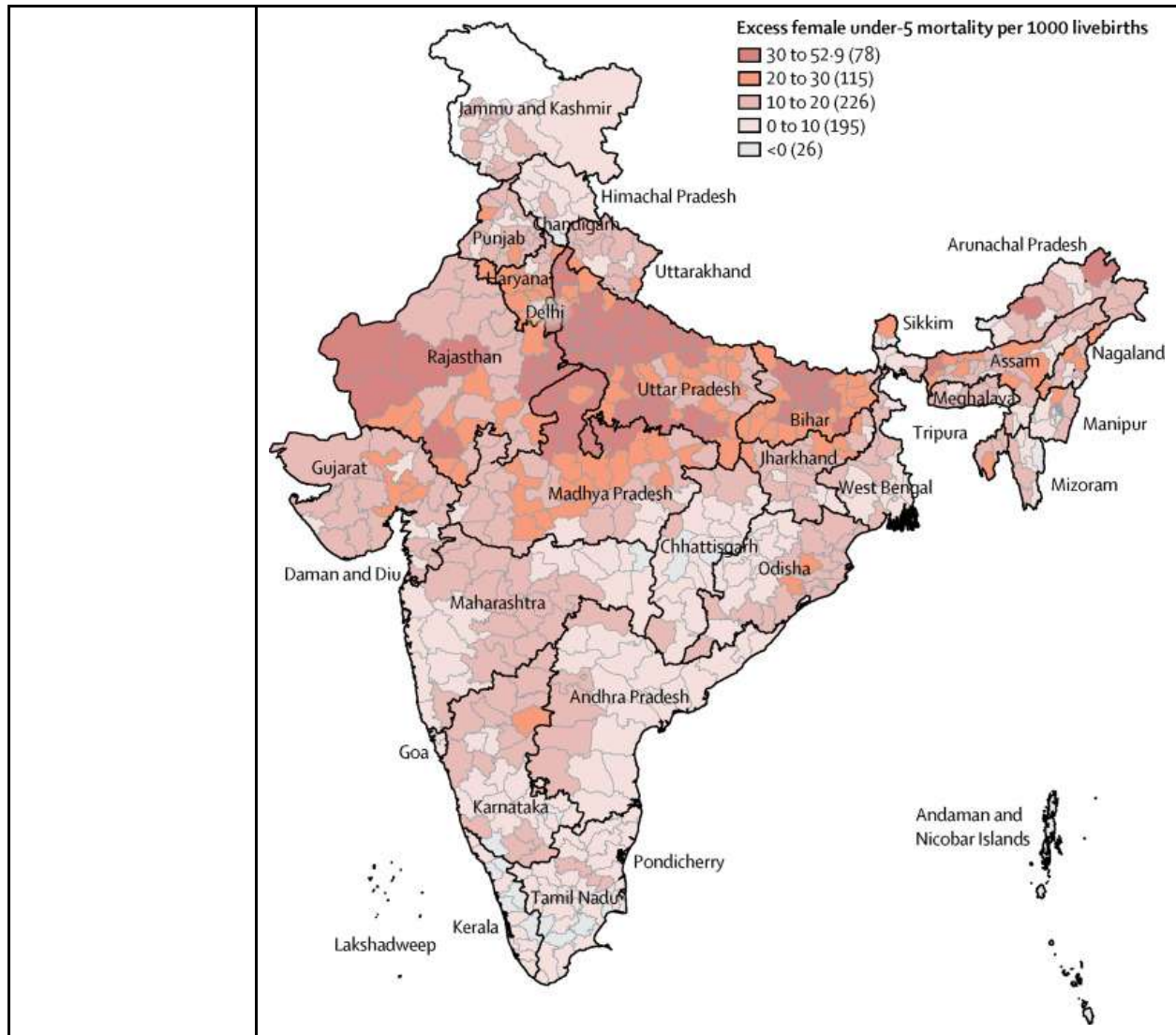
	<p>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FACED BY INDIAN WOMEN</p> <div> <div>29.3 2015-16</div> <div>31.2 2019-21</div> </div> <p>STATES WITH THE HIGHEST CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (Married women, 18-49, spousal violence)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>State</th> <th>Percentage (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Karnataka</td> <td>44.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bihar</td> <td>40.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manipur</td> <td>39.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tamil Nadu</td> <td>38.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Telangana</td> <td>36.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Uttar Pradesh</td> <td>34.8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	State	Percentage (%)	Karnataka	44.4	Bihar	40.0	Manipur	39.6	Tamil Nadu	38.1	Telangana	36.9	Uttar Pradesh	34.8
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<p>Feminisation of Poverty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The feminization of poverty has been used to illustrate differences between male and female poverty in a given context as well as changes in male and female poverty over time. • Globally, 247 million women aged 15 years and older will be living on less than 1.90 U.S. dollars per day in 2021, compared to 236 million men. 														

	<p>Feminization of Poverty Poverty has a women's face</p> <p>Causes include:</p>  <pre> graph TD A[Sexual violence] --- B[Employment] B --- C[Climate change] C --- D[Health] D --- E[Femonomics or gender of money] E --- F[Education] F --- G[Structure of family and household] G --- A </pre>										
<p>Feminisation of Agriculture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This phenomenon of increased participation by women, in agriculture, is referred to as the '<i>feminization of the Agri-workforce</i>'.  <p>Celebrating the role of women in agriculture</p> <p>This Women's Day, let's take a quick glance at how women have dedicated their lives to nurture agriculture in India.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Percentage</th> <th>Fact</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>78%</td> <td>of India's employed women work in agriculture</td> </tr> <tr> <td>70%</td> <td>of farm work is led by women</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50%</td> <td>of rural women are agricultural labourers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60%</td> <td>of world food volume is grown by women</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Percentage	Fact	78%	of India's employed women work in agriculture	70%	of farm work is led by women	50%	of rural women are agricultural labourers	60%	of world food volume is grown by women
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Missing women and unwanted girls

- The term "**missing women**" indicates a **shortfall in the number of women relative** to the expected number of women in a region or country.
- **Twenty-one million unwanted girls under the age of 25 in India.**
- These girls are more precisely **described as "less wanted" children.**
- They are **daughters that parents gave birth to** when they were really hoping for a son.
- The **2018 Economic Survey** gives us a powerful new number: **India has twenty-one million "unwanted girls".**





6. Why are Indian women not able to reach the job market?

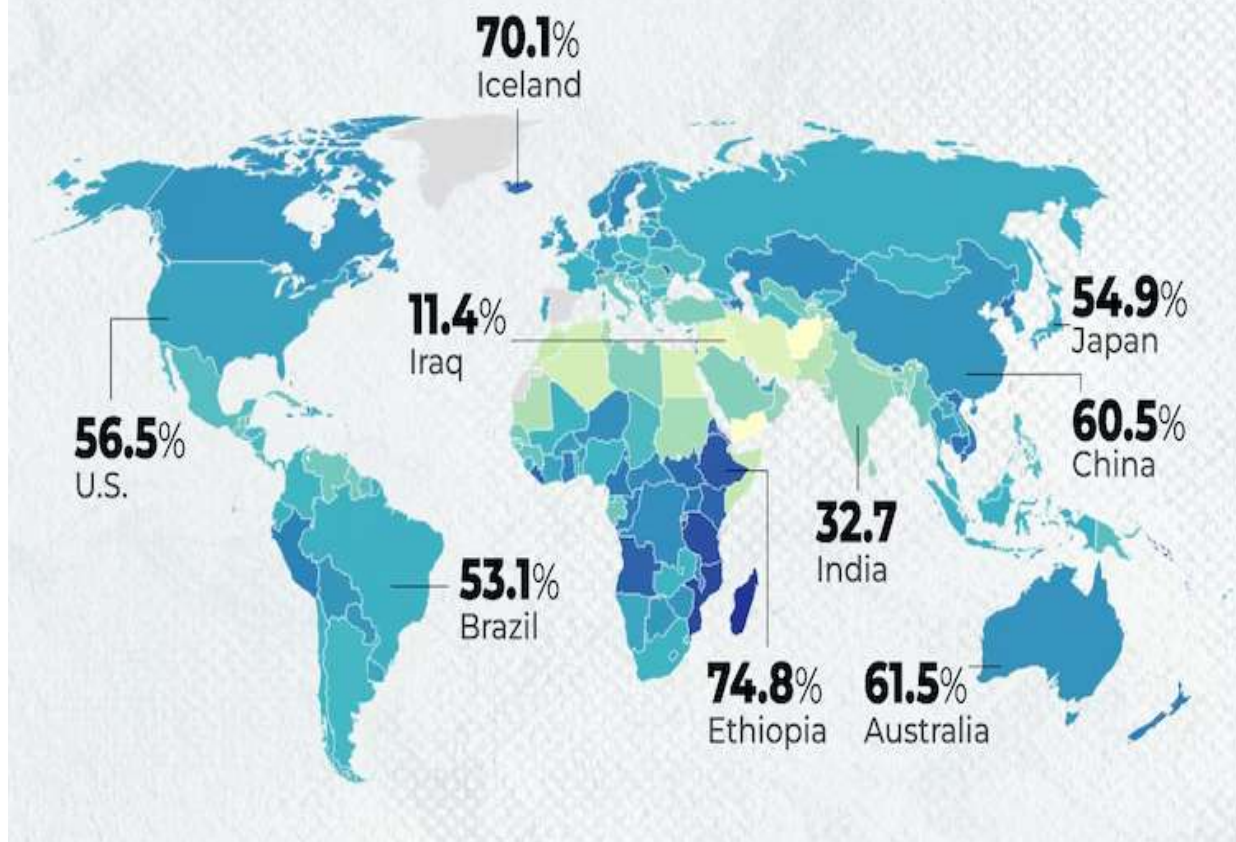
- **India was 165th out of 187 countries** in terms of **female labour force** participation rate in **2023**, according to the **World Bank's Gender Data Portal**.
- India's **female labour force participation rate** was only **32.7 per cent**.

Indian Women Out of Job Market

India was 165th out of 187 countries in terms of female labour force participation rate

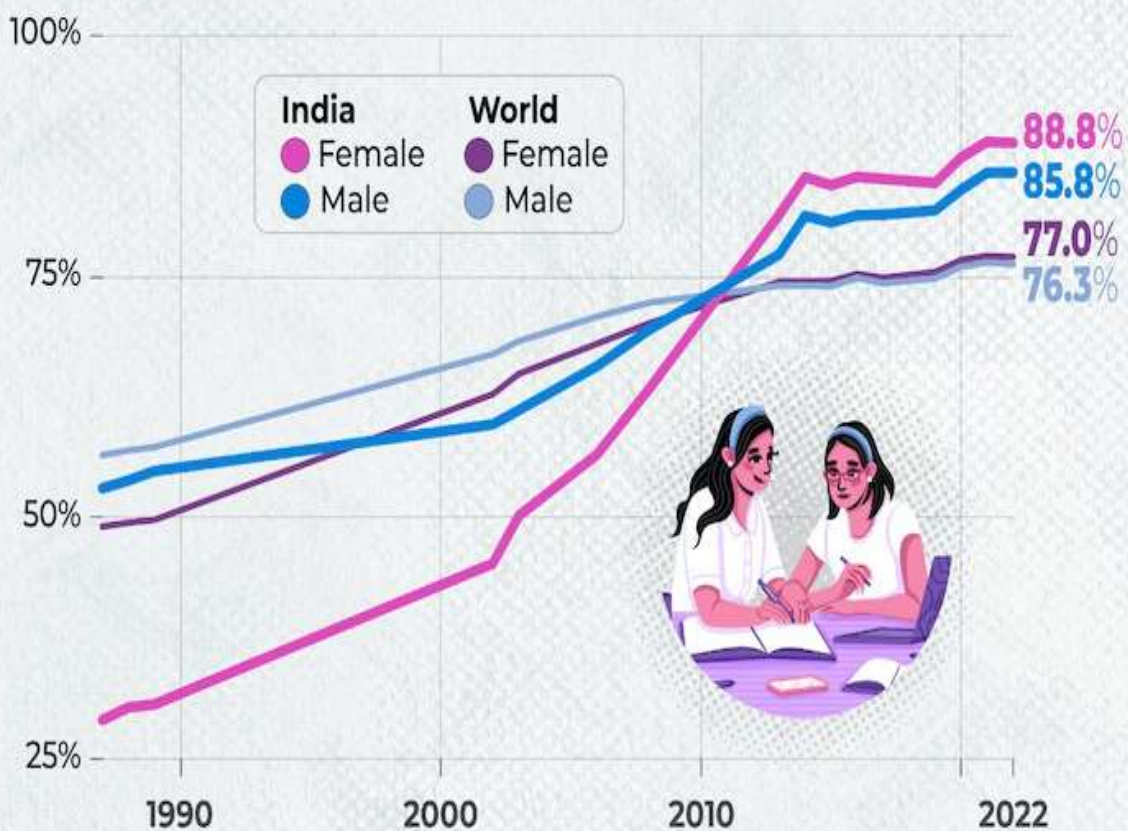


Female labour force participation rate in 2023



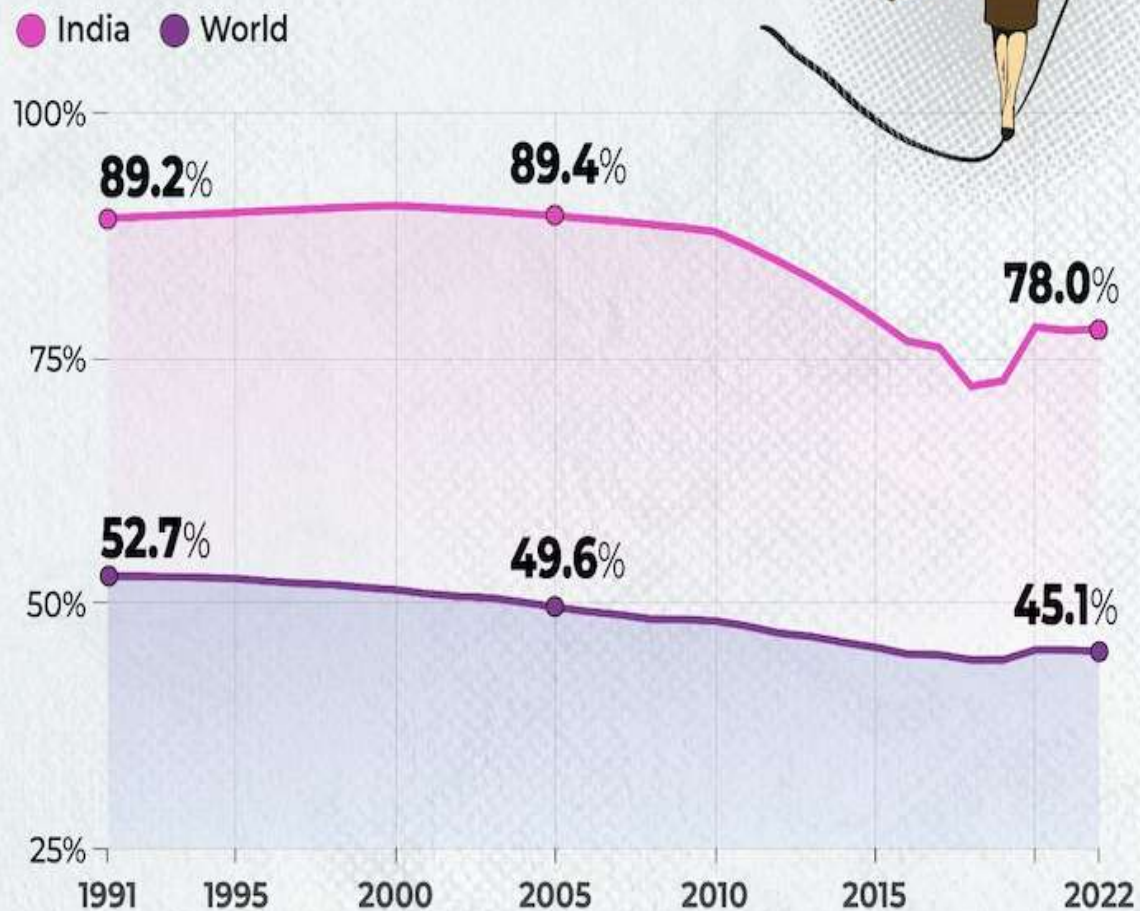
Girls Outpace Boys in School Education

Completion rate for lower secondary school (%)



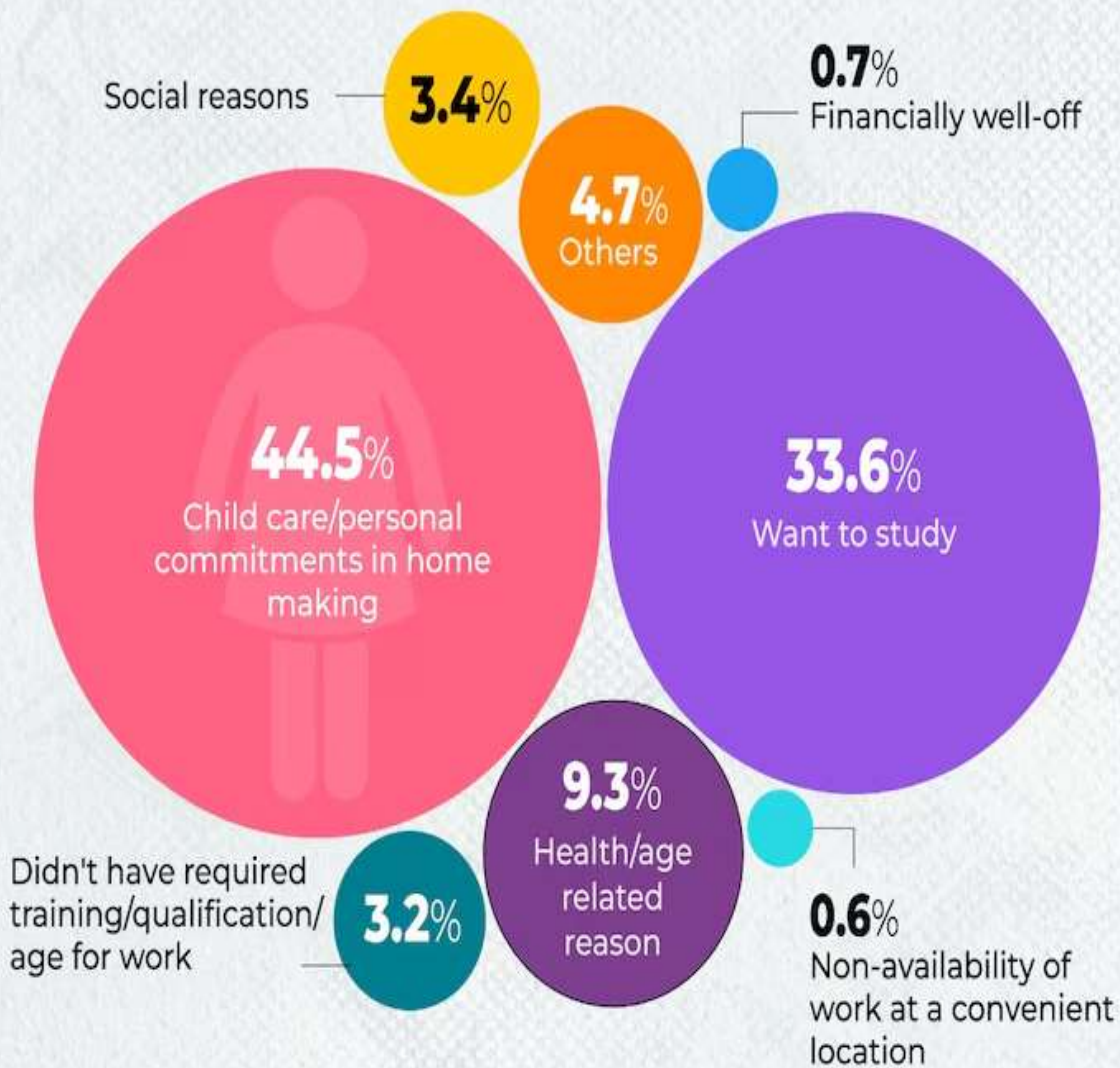
Women Vulnerable at the Workplace

Vulnerable employment, which includes lack of decent work conditions, is higher for women in India compared to the global average

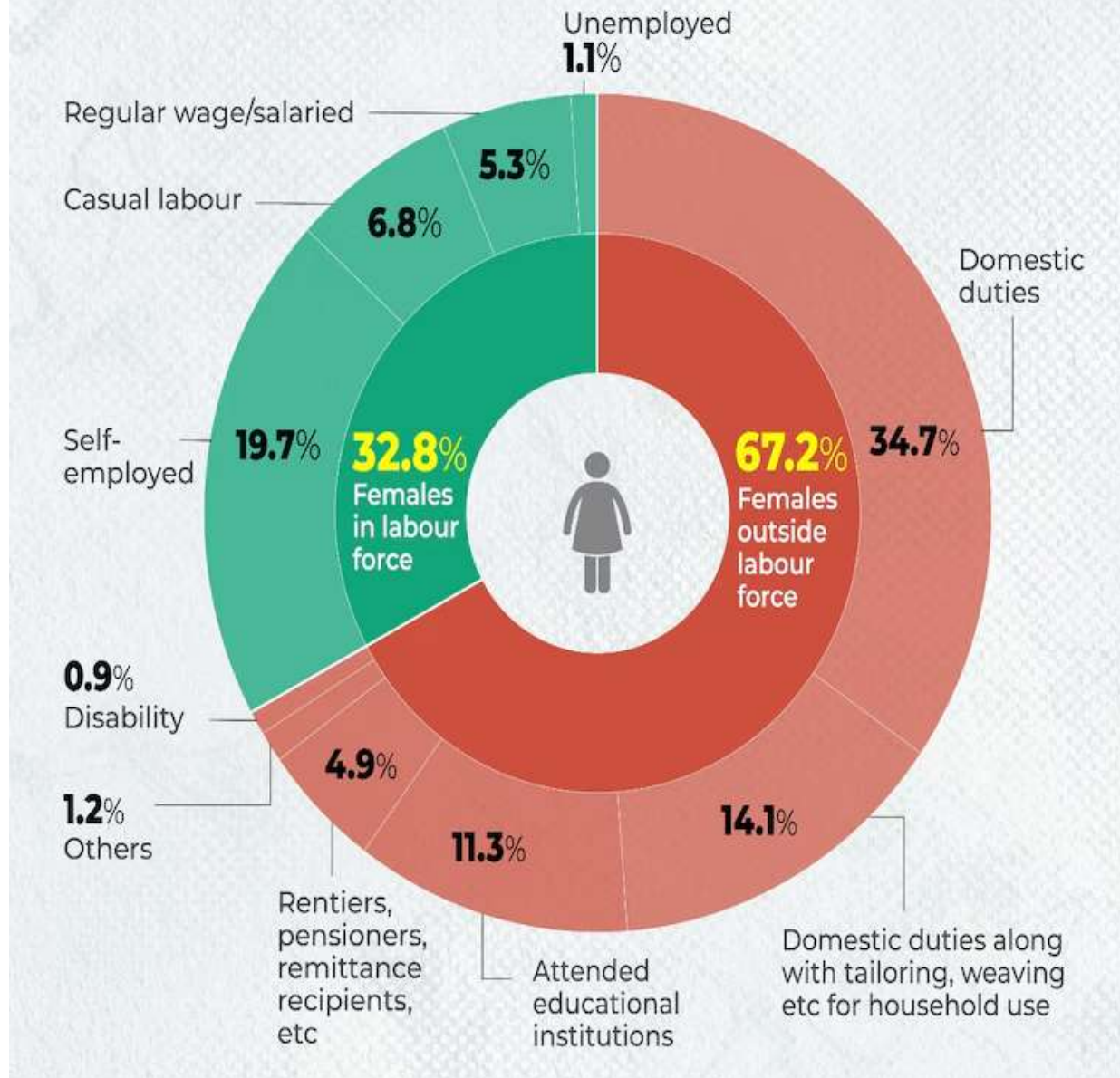


Why are Indian Women Out of Job Market?

Reasons reported by females for not being in labour force (%)



What are Women in India Doing?



7. Why is women empowerment necessary in India?



Need for women empowerment	Analysis
Gender Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's empowerment is essential for achieving gender equality, which is a fundamental human right.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality means that women and men have equal rights, opportunities, and resources, and can participate equally in all aspects of life.
Economic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's empowerment is also important for economic growth and development. • When women have equal access to education, employment, and other opportunities, they are better able to contribute to the economy and society as a whole. • According to UN Women, Women's economic empowerment increases economic diversification and income equality for shared prosperity
Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's empowerment is also essential for achieving social justice. • Women and girls are often subject to discrimination, violence, and other forms of oppression simply because of their gender. • Empowering women helps to create a more just and equitable society for everyone
Health and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's empowerment is also important for promoting health and well-being. • When women have access to education and healthcare, they can better take care of themselves and their families
Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's empowerment is critical for achieving sustainable development.

- When **women are empowered**, they are **better able to contribute** to efforts to address environmental challenges, **reduce poverty**, and **promote social justice**.

8. What is the magnitude of crime against women?

- India recorded 22.8 lakh crimes against women between 2016 to 2021, of which about 7 lakh, or 30 per cent, were under Section 498A of IPC, as per the MoSPI's 'Women and Men in India 2022' report released in 2023.



- The **Women and Men in India 2023** report shows a rise from 359,849 cases in 2017 to over 445,000 in 2022, averaging 1,220 cases daily, averaging 51 First Information Report (FIRs) per hour.
- The **National Family Health Survey-5** found that **nearly one-third of women aged 15-49 in India have experienced some form of violence**.



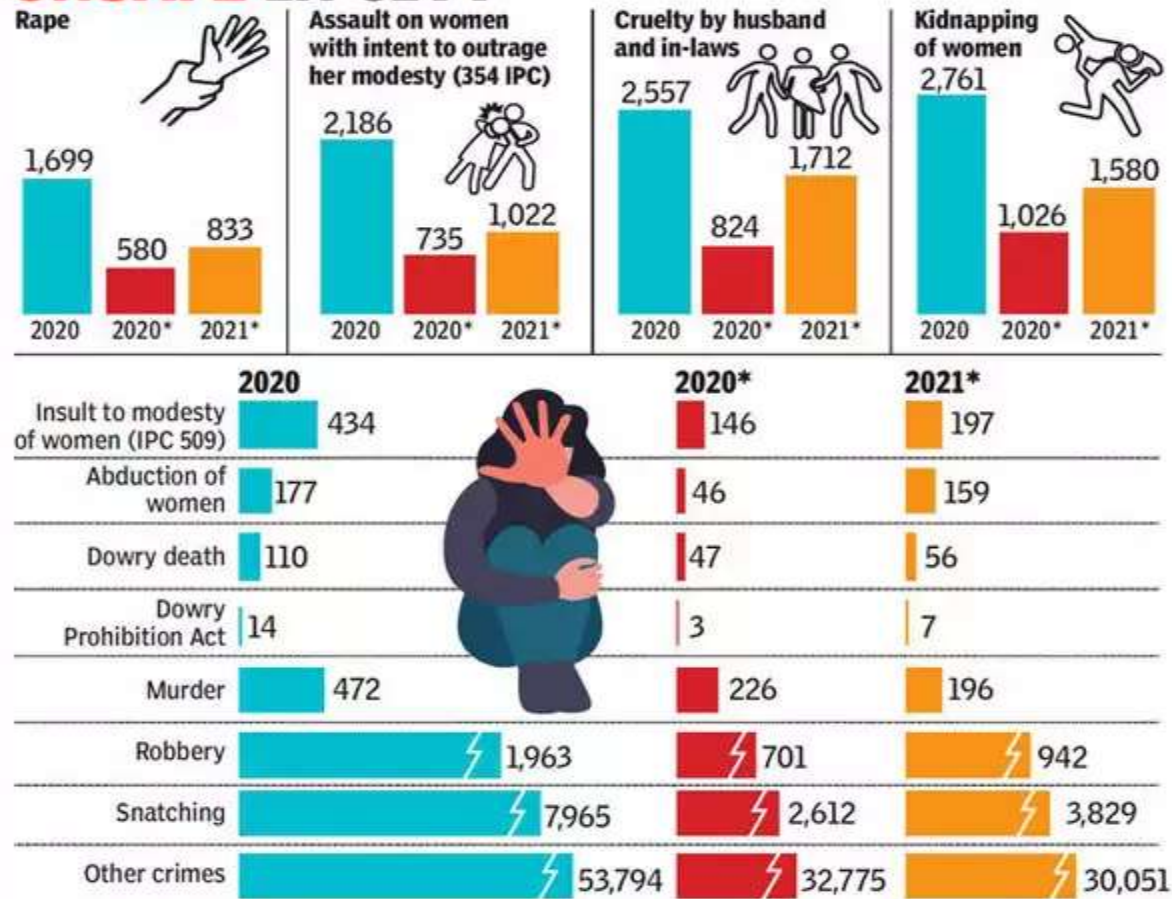
The recently released Human Development Report of the UNDP has a shocking statistic: More than half of India's population aged 15-49, both male and female, feel it is justified for a husband to beat his wife for certain reasons. For instance, if she burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects children or refuses to have sexual relations. This might help explain the dismal figures presented by the National Crime Records Bureau on incidents of domestic violence. What is disturbing is that the number of incidents of domestic violence per lakh of population has steadily increased in the past decade. While some of this may be due to an increase in the reporting of such incidents, that can only explain part of this depressing trend

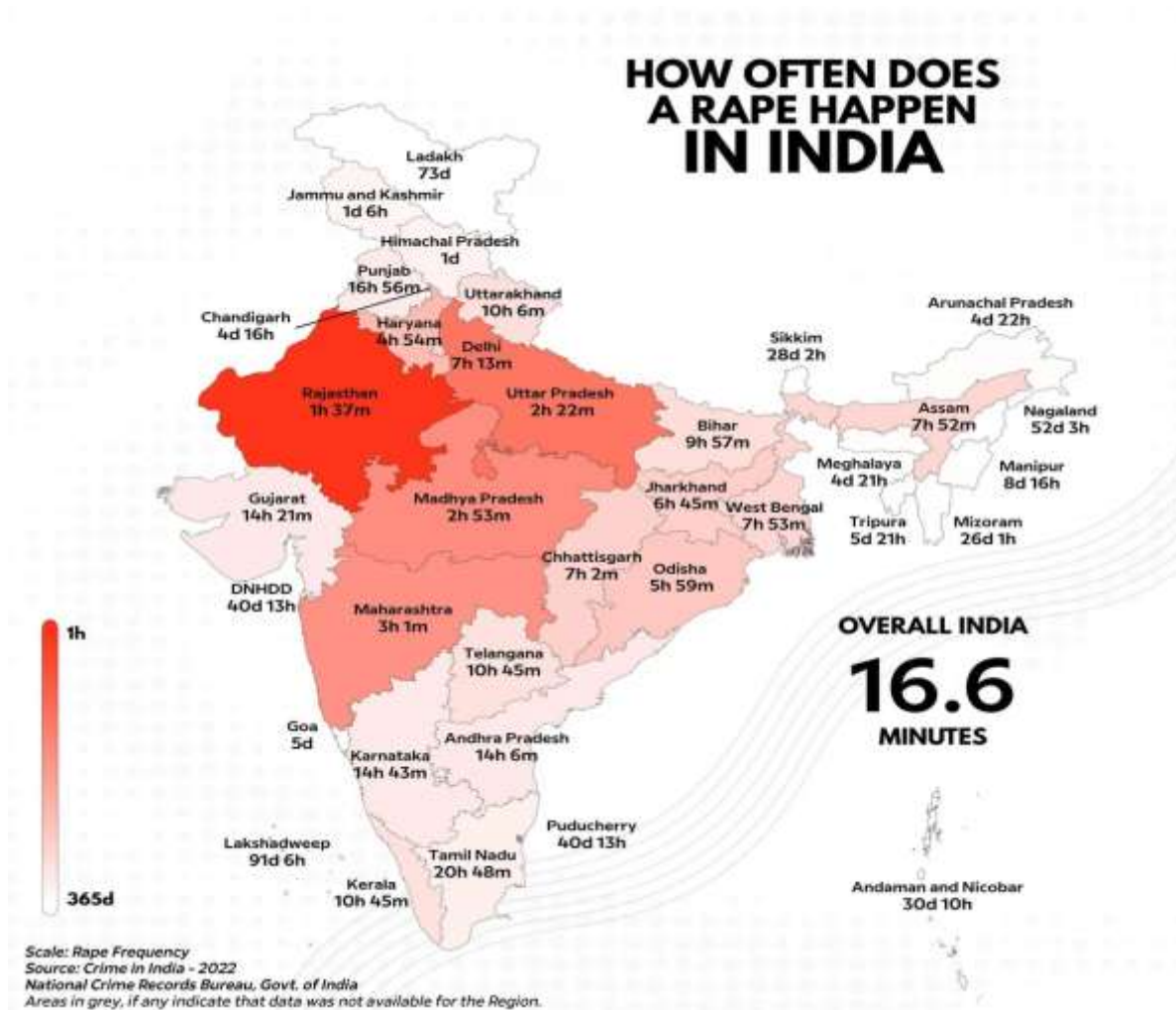
Cruelty By Husband Or His Relatives

Year	Incidence	Rate
2013	1,18,866	9.7
2012	1,06,527	8.8
2011	99,135	8.2
2010	94,041	7.9
2009	89,546	7.7
2008	81,344	7.1
2007	75,930	6.7
2006	63,128	5.6
2005	58,319	5.3
2004	58,121	5.4

Source: NCRB, Rate per lakh of total population

UNSAFE IN CITY





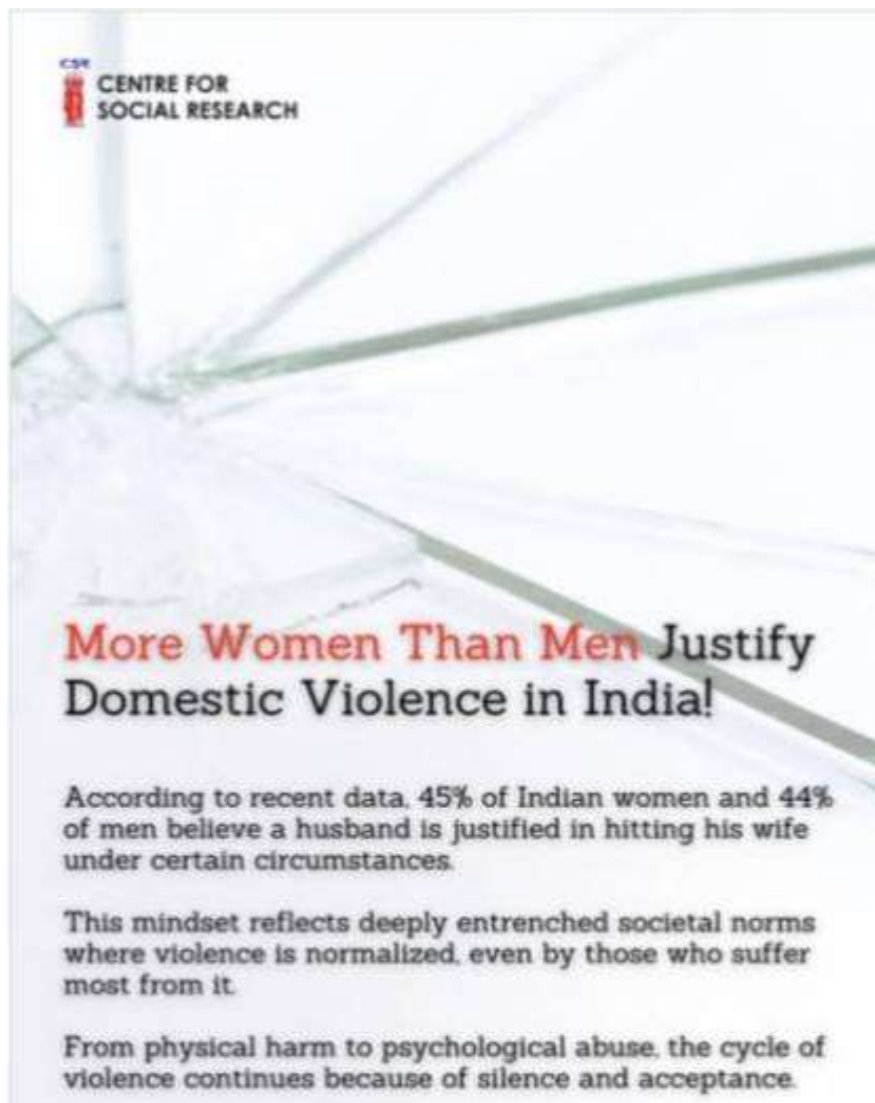
9. Enlist few reasons for increasing rape in India?

1. Few female police:

- Studies show that women are more likely to report sex crimes if female police officers are available.
- India has **historically had a much lower percentage of female police officers than other Asian countries.**

2. Accepting domestic violence:

- Indian society sees **domestic violence** to be something deserving. UNICEF, in one of its reports, found that **57% of Indian boys and 53% of girls think that the beating of a wife is justified.**



3. Discouragement of rape victims to compromise:

We treat domestic violence victims like refugees - the only way for them to be safe is to leave everything they know and love. This has become the 'norm' because we don't have systems that hold perpetrators accountable, protect victims, and because we accept the unacceptable.

~ Paula Goodwin

@DefendSurvivors

- **Families in Indian society** are not ready to accept the fact that **someone in their family has been raped** and they often **advise the victims to stay away** from the haphazard caused after rape in the police station.
- This is the **sole reason why most of the rapes are not even registered in India.**

IT'S WIDESPREAD



1 in every 5 Indian men admit to forcing their wives into sex, according to a 2011 study by the International Center for Research on Women



On an average, at least **one in three women** is beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused by an intimate partner in their lifetime

A study in two South Asian countries by the UN found that between **74% and 94% of the police force** said that a husband is allowed to rape his wife



IT GOES UNNOTICED AND UNPUNISHED

127 countries

do not criminalise rape within marriage



2.6 billion

live in countries where marital rape is not a criminal offence

603 million

women live in countries where domestic violence is not a crime

HOW IT AFFECTS WOMEN



Victims of sexual violence by partners are 16% more likely to have a low-birth-weight baby

They are more than twice as likely to have an abortion



Twice as likely to experience depression

1.5 times more likely to acquire HIV



HOW IS MARITAL RAPE DIFFERENT?

It is an unwanted **sexual act** by a spouse without the other person's **consent**. It may or may not be done using force or intimidation.

In a society where marriage is considered **licence for sex**, marital rape is an alien concept to many.

NO LEGAL PROTECTION IN INDIA.

According to Section 375 of the IPC: "**Sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife, the wife not under 15 years of age, is not rape.**"

INDIA CAN LEARN FROM THESE COUNTRIES

US

Marital rape became a crime in every state by 1993. **Punishment:** Most states penalise marital rape like any other rape—with fines (that could exceed \$50,000) and prison terms (varying between several years and life in prison without parole).

BRITAIN

In 1991, rape within marriage became a crime. The 2003 Sexual Offences Act clarified the law, giving consent a legal definition in England and Wales. **Punishment:** The accused will face five years prison.

BHUTAN

Marital rape is considered an offence and a petty misdemeanour. **Punishment:** Marital rape is punishable by a minimum prison term of one year and a maximum term of three years.

Research: Astha Alang; Design: Alankar

10. Enlist forms of sexual harassment at workplace?

Examples of Different Types of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

In many cases, the conduct that leads to a finding of sexual harassment may not fit neatly under the label of quid pro quo or hostile work environment. There are also cases where physical, visual, and verbal conduct overlap to create sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment in the workplace can take several forms:



- Unwanted sexual advances
- Verbal harassment
- Displaying sexually explicit materials
- Sexual jokes or teasing
- Sexual comments about appearance
- Unwanted touching or brushing against someone's body
- Cyber harassment
- Retaliation for rejecting advances
- Sexual intimidation or threats

11. Enlist ways for ensuring women safety at the workplace?



Ways	Analysis
Sexual Harassment Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any big/small organizations must have a Sexual Harassment Policy which defines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual harassment and its forms Explain the zero-tolerance approach Educate on inappropriate conduct Outline consequences
Create awareness among the employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's sad that many organizations and people, in general, are still not aware of women's safety in the workplace. Creating awareness among the employees on women's safety and their health is vital. There is a need to use all possible techniques and ideas to spread awareness. Workshops, open group discussions, or activities can help create awareness of women's safety in the workplace. Wellness programs are a must when it comes to the physical and psychological health of your workers.
Encourage women to express	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally, women facing sexual harassment don't speak up. We as a society are responsible for this as often we teach our girl child to behave and act in a particular way. Since childhood, girls are given a set of do's and don't. This conditioning later stops women from expressing themselves.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel shame and fear consequences. Other reasons are low self-esteem and lack of information.
Role of an HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR needs to explain to the employees about the safe work environment. • It is HR's role to bring notice of any unwelcome behavior faced by the employees to higher authorities. • Ex: Richard Lobo, Executive Vice President and Head of Human Resources at Infosys Ltd, said that whenever people join their organization, especially at the entry-level, they undergo training sessions where they receive case studies of what is okay and what is not okay in the workplace.
Flexible Work Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering flexible work arrangements like remote work or adjustable hours can help women balance their professional and personal lives, especially if they face concerns about traveling during off-hours.
Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) on women's safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 ("POSH Act") has made ICC compulsory for both the private and non-private for women's safety on sexual harassment. • A woman who is harassed can make the complaint within 90 days of the incident. • If the woman is not comfortable expressing herself near ICC, in that case, her co-worker, friend, or relative can complain with written consent from the victim.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The inquiry should take place within 90 days and once completed, a report has to be issued within ten days.
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12. What is the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action?



- The **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** is a global policy framework that **outlines how to achieve gender equality** and women's rights.
- It was adopted in **1995** at the **Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing**.
- The **30th anniversary** of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is in **2025**.
- The Platform of Action **covers 12 critical areas of concern**.

Women and the environment



Violence against women



The girl child



Women and the economy



Institutional mechanisms



Women and armed conflict



Human rights of women



Education and training of women



Women and poverty



Women in power and decision-making



Women and health



Women and the media



13. Enlist initiatives for women empowerment in india?





14. What is the relevance of the topic for UPSC CSE?

For Prelims: Crime Against Women, Gender Equality, National Crime Records Bureau's Annual Reports, Sexual Harassment At Work, Child Marriage, Dowry System, Vishakha Guideline, Supreme Court, Domestic Violence, Acid Attacks On Women, Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act 1994, Article 21, One Stop Centres, Mahila Police Volunteers, Investigation Tracking System For Sexual Offences, Justice Verma Committee, Representation of Women in Law Enforcement and the Judiciary.

For Mains: Significance of Government Policies & Interventions in Addressing Issues Related to Women, Reservation for women, Nirbhaya Fund, Fast track courts.

Some previous years prelims questions.

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding ‘Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam’: **(2024)**

1. Provisions will come into effect from 18th Lok Sabha.
2. This will be in force for 15 years after becoming an Act.
3. There are provisions for the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes Women within the quota reserved for the Scheduled Castes.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1 and 3 only

Ans: (c)

Q2. Consider the following statements in the context of interventions being undertaken under Anaemia Mukta Bharat Strategy: **(2023)**

1. It provides prophylactic calcium supplementation for pre-school children, adolescents and pregnant women.
2. It runs a campaign for delayed cord clamping at the time of child-birth.
3. It provides for periodic deworming to children and adolescents
4. It addresses non-nutritional causes of anemia in endemic pockets with special focus on malaria, hemoglobinopathies and fluorosis.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

Ans: (c)

Some previous years mains questions.

- Q1. Distinguish between gender equality, gender equity, and women empowerment. Why is it important to take gender concerns into account in program design and implementation? **(2024-10 Marks)**
- Q2. Globalization has increased urban migration by skilled young unmarried women from various classes. How has this trend impacted personal freedom and relationships with family? **(2024-15 Marks)**
- Q3. Is the National Commission for Women able to strategize and tackle the problems that women face at both public and private spheres? Give reasons in support of your answer. **(2017-10 Marks)**
- Q4. Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization on women in India. **(2015-15 Marks)**
- Q5. We are witnessing increasing instances of sexual violence against women in the country. Despite existing legal provisions against it, the number of such incidences is on the rise. Suggest some innovative measures to tackle this menace. **(2014-10 Marks)**

Some questions from this year and previous years interview transcripts.

Board Dinesh Dasa sir:

- You did schooling in Delhi majorly and lived in an urban setting.

- How will you cater to rural women?
- Enlist a few Schemes for women by the government of India.
- What is gender budgeting?

Board Dinesh Dasa sir:

- Which women have influenced you in life?
- Why are all female candidates saying kiran shaw Majumder and last year all were saying priyanka chopra. Why?

Board Sanjay Verma sir:

- Women's role in Bengal Renaissance?

Board Lt Gen Raj Shukla sir:

- Why are we facing this issue of women not contributing much to the economy?
- What can be done to improve?
- How can their condition be improved?

Board Sheel Vardhan Sir:

- Issues faced by women in the armed forces specially the combat forces.
- Can women be at the forefront during a battle.

Some questions for QUIZ.

Q1. Consider the following indexes:

1. Gender Inequality Index (GII)
2. Women's Empowerment Index (WEI)
3. Global Gender Parity Index (GGPI)
4. Women, Business and the Law (WBL) index

How many of the above indexes are released by the World Economic Forum (WEF)?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

Ans: (a)

Some questions for POLL.

Q1. Do you think women in India are truly empowered?

- (a) YES
- (b) NO
- (c) Can't say.

Q2. Can capital punishment help in reducing rape?

- (a) YES
- (b) NO
- (c) Can't say.

