



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

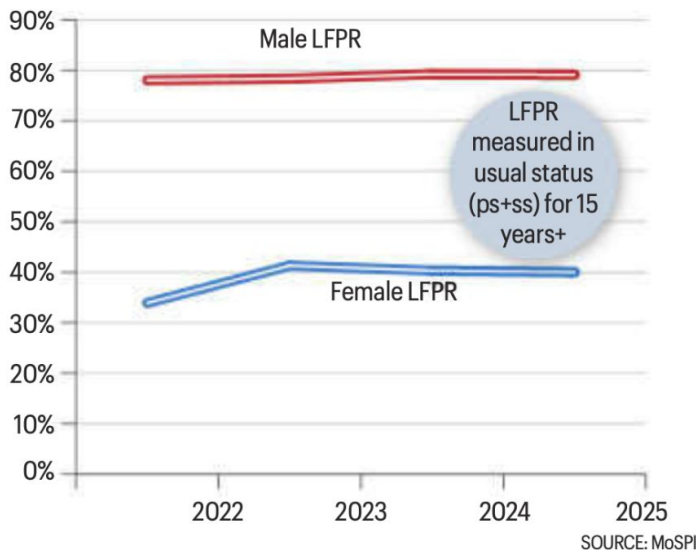
20th April 2026



CONTEXT: In recent years, there has been a rise in female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR); however, women still continue to encounter the glass ceiling.

Women's participation in the economy rising, but presence at top dismal

Female LFPR has risen to half that of men...



→ **Definition:** ratio of the number of women who are part of the labour force to the number of women in the working age (greater than 15 years of age).

◆ A woman is considered to be a part of the labour force if she/he is either employed or actively looking for work.

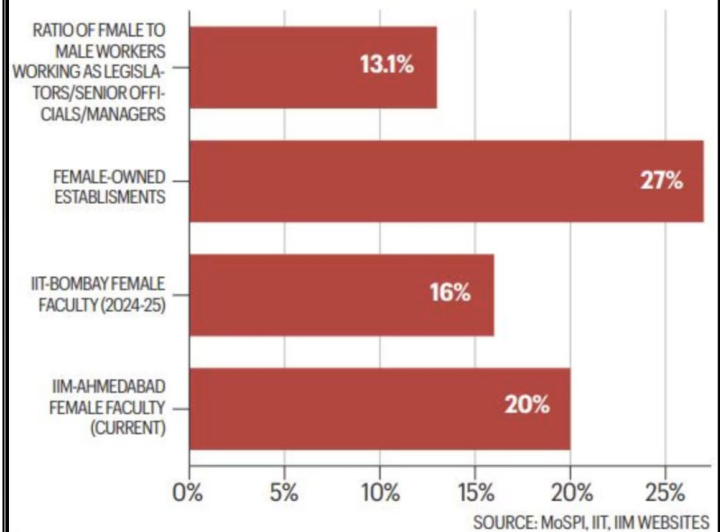
Data Point:

- **Female LFPR** - has risen from **33.9% in 2022 to 40% in 2025**.
- But **below the global average** (49%) and **emerging market peers** like Brazil (53%) and Vietnam (69%).

Glass Ceiling

- **Indian Institutes of Technology**, the proportion of female faculty is stagnant at around 14% of total strength.
- **Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises**, the share of female-owned proprietary establishments stood at 27% in 2025.
- **Periodic Labour Force Survey:** for every 100 males working as legislators, senior officials, and managers in 2025, there were only 13 females in similarly high positions.
- **Corporate houses:** While nearly all of India's leading firms have a woman as a director on their boards, **77% had only 1-2 women as directors**.

But in positions of power, women lag behind



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Factors affecting Female LFPR

Supply-side factors:

- **GER in higher education:**
 - **All India Survey on Higher Education 2021-2022:** the ratio of female GER to male GER is **1.01 in 2021-22.**
- **Time Poverty:** Time-use survey (NSO) - women spend 8 times more on household work.
- **Socio-economic factors:** Family income v/s Patriarchal mindset

Demand - Side factors:

- **Inflexible labour-laws:** Factories Act - restrict "Night shift"
- **Lack of adequate employment opportunities:**
 - Textiles - stiff competition from Bangladesh
 - Gig economy - "Pink Jobs"
- **Motherhood Penalty**

Reasons for Increase in Female LFPR

- **Improved methodology:**
 - "Unpaid helpers" in family business - PLFS

- **Increased Feminisation of agriculture:**
 - 1/3rd of farmers - Rural to Urban migration
- **Reduction in Time Poverty:**
 - Universalisation of basic services
- **Reduced income levels post Covid**
 - Income factor dominate over patriarchy
- **Change in labour laws:**
 - Rajasthan, Odisha & karnataka - Night Shifts
- **Flexible timings in Gig - Economy**
- **Proactive Government policies:**
 - Maternity benefits act, anganwadi centres & Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013.

Glass ceiling in India

- **India's Half-Hearted Approach:**
 - **Companies Act, 2013** and **SEBI regulations** mandate the presence of **at least one woman on the Board of Directors in India's top 1,000 listed companies.**
 - The **mandate for 'one-woman director'** is often interpreted as the maximum number of women needed on the board, regardless of the board's size.



CONTEXT: In recent years, there has been a rise in female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR); however, women still continue to encounter the glass ceiling.

- **Pink Jobs:**
 - MoD - 13.4% women constitute IAF workforce – highest among all three services – while they comprise 6.85% of Army's workforce and 6% of the Navy's.
- **Motherhood Penalty**
 - double-burden syndrome forces many women to exit mid-career
- **Pipeline Leakage Problem:**
 - A lack of women in middle management positions results in a smaller talent pool for leadership roles.
- **Limited networking opportunities:**
 - Professional networks play a vital role in career advancement. Male-dominated networking hinders women's ability to leverage professional connections.

Need to increase Female LFPR

- **To realise goal of developed economy by 2047:**
 - **World Bank, 2023:** it had to **grow nearly 8% every year**, which was not possible with the low level of female participation in the workforce.
- **Reaping Gender dividend:** Women- 49% of population but account for 18% of output.
- **Promote Inclusive Growth**
 - **E.g. Tirupur, Tamil Nadu renowned as the "Knitwear Capital of India" -**

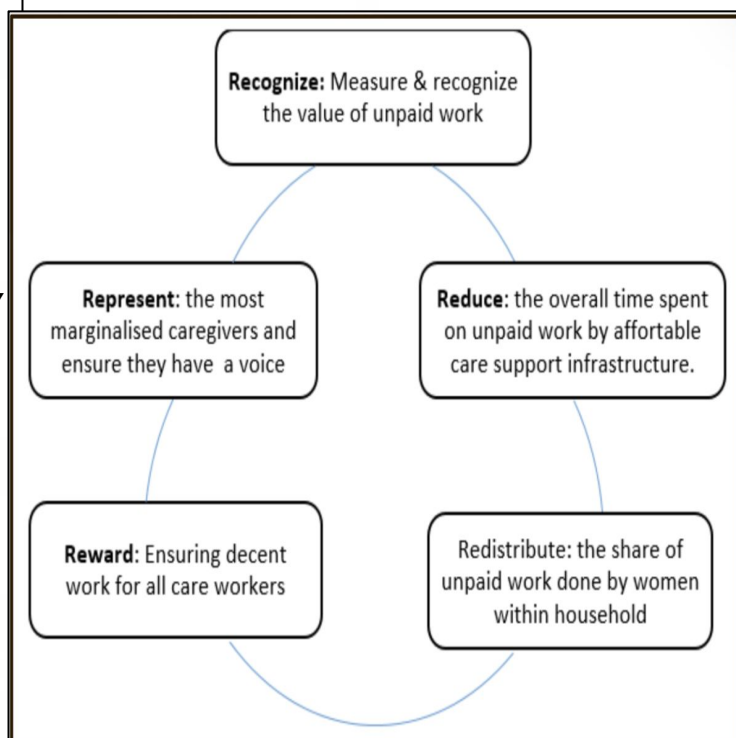
- High Female LFPR – better human development indicators.

Need for Female Leaders

- **Economic Growth Multiplier: Boston Consulting Group study** - 19% higher revenue due to innovation.
- **Investor and Consumer Confidence:** higher ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) ratings
- **Inclusive Work Culture:** Women leaders promote empathetic leadership and employee-friendly policies, improving overall productivity.
- **Global Commitments:** SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities)

Way Ahead

Monetization of Care Economy: ILO's 5 R



CONTEXT: In recent years, there has been a rise in female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR); however, women still continue to encounter the glass ceiling.

- **Mandatory Boardroom Quotas:**
 - **Norway** mandates that **women make up 40%** of the Board of Directors.
 - **Italy** has placed their requirements at **30%**.
- **Mandatory diversity disclosures:**
 - **UK Corporate Governance Code**, all premium listed companies must state their diversity and inclusion agenda.
- **Gender-Responsive Policies:**
 - Paid parental leaves
 - **(SEWA) Sangini in some Indian cities** - Public crèches can be operated at worksite clusters such as near industrial areas
- **Leadership Training & Mentorship:**

Establish targeted training programs and women-exclusive professional networks to build leadership pipelines.
- **Incentivizing Companies:** Offer tax benefits or funding support to organizations actively promoting gender diversity.

Mains Practise Question

"Enumerate the key social, economic, and institutional barriers that hinder women's labour force participation, and suggest policy measures to address them."

(15 Marks, 250 words)



CONTEXT: Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan is on a two day visit to Sri Lanka.

India Sri-Lanka Relations

- **History of relationship:**
 - **Ancient Ties and Cultural Relations:**

Buddhism is one of the strongest pillars connecting the two nations and civilizations from the time of the **Great Indian Emperor Ashoka**.
 - **Civil War and Indian Intervention, 1980s:** war primarily involved the **Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)**.
 - **Indo-Sri Lankan Accord (1987):**
 - aimed to provide *regional autonomy to Tamil areas*.
 - deployment of the **Indian Peace Keeping Force**

- This intervention faced significant backlash and ultimately led to **India's withdrawal in 1990**.
- **End of the civil war in 2009:** India played a crucial role in reconstruction efforts in Sri Lanka.

Importance of Sri-Lanka for India

- **Strategic location:** Indian Ocean trade routes
 - The **East-West maritime route** passing around the island state carries around **two-thirds of the world's oil** and **half of the world's container transportation**.
- **Maritime security:** Sri Lanka is home to ports that have the potential to become important **maritime hubs (Hambantota Port)**.
- **China angle:** Sri Lanka acts as a buffer in countering Chinese strategic encirclement through the Belt and Road Initiative.



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India Sri-Lanka Relations

- **Trade and Commerce:**
 - **India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement, 2000**
 - India is one of Sri Lanka's top trade partners within SAARC.
 - **India a key FDI contributor to Sri Lanka:**
According to the Central bank of Sri Lanka - cumulative investments of USD 2.25 billion till 2023.
- **Tourism and Connectivity:**
 - India is the leading source of tourists to Sri Lanka (*around 4.16 lakh in 2024.*)
 - **Sri Lanka's adoption of India's UPI** and use of the rupee for trade settlement boost **fintech connectivity**.
- **Development Cooperation:**
 - India funded housing projects and programmes under the **\$450 million-package** extended towards **cyclone Ditwah recovery**.
 - **Credit Lines and Currency Support:**
India also extended **\$400 million currency swap** and deferrals on trade liabilities worth about \$500 million due to imports from India.
- **IMF's \$2.9 billion bailout package approved in 2023:** India was the **first country to provide a letter of support for Sri Lanka's debt restructuring** to the IMF.

- **Humanitarian Assistance:** India acts as a **'first responder' for Sri Lanka** in the field of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. E.g., During COVID-19 pandemic, India sent 500,000 vaccines to Sri Lanka.
- **Cooperation in Maritime Security:**
 - **Joint Exercises:** SLINEX naval exercises & Military Exercise MITRA SHAKTI
 - **Partnership in regional maritime security architecture:** Sri Lankan **coastal surveillance** radars being integrated to the **International Fusion Center – Indian Ocean Region** at **Gurugram** in India.
- **Energy Cooperation:**
 - develop **Trincomalee oil tank farm**.
 - **Sri Lanka cancelled a Chinese company's licence** to build three solar and wind hybrid power generation facilities.



NDTV
<https://www.ndtv.com> > India News

[Sri Lanka Awards Energy Deal To India, Scraps Chinese ...](#)

1 Mar 2024 — Sri Lanka's energy ministry said Friday that the project had been revived and was now fully funded by an \$11 million Indian government grant. [Read more](#)



CONTEXT: Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan is on a two day visit to Sri Lanka.

India's concerns with Sri-Lanka

• Rising Chinese Footprint:

- **2017** - 99-year lease of Hambantota Port
- develop an airport in capital Colombo.
- **Chinese vessel - Yuan Wang-5:** conduct data collection activities may potentially aid future military operations against India.
 - **docking of 'Yuan Wang 5' at Hambantota in Sri Lanka** had created a major diplomatic showdown between India and Sri Lanka.

• Fishing disputes:

- Despite **1974 Indo-Lanka Maritime Boundary Agreement** - maritime disputes, like **Katchatheevu Island dispute**.
- **Differing interpretation:**
 - **India:** Resting and Net Drying & Visit the annual St. Anthony's festival without the need of visa
 - **Sri Lanka** limiting Indian fishermen's access to activities such as resting, drying nets, and visiting the Catholic shrine without visa.

• Ethnic Reconciliation:

- Delay in implementation of **13th Amendment (Constitution of Sri Lanka)** was enacted in **following the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, 1987**.
- Aimed to devolve powers to provincial councils, particularly in **Tamil-majority areas**.
- Sinhala nationalists oppose devolution, while Tamil groups demand broader autonomy, placing India in a diplomatic bind.

• Safeguarding India's strategic interests:

- **Adani Green on February 12, 2025 withdrew** from a controversial \$ **442-million renewable energy project in northern Sri Lanka**, amid fierce opposition from locals and a legal battle over its approval and potential environmental impact.



CONTEXT: Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan is on a two day visit to Sri Lanka.

Way Ahead

- **India's Five "S" Approach:**
 - Samman (Respect), Samvad (Dialogue), Sahyog (Cooperation), and Shanti (Peace); to create conditions for universal Samriddhi (Prosperity).
- **Constructive engagement:**
 - addressing fishermen issues **"in a humanitarian manner"**, considering the livelihoods of fishing communities on both sides.
 - **Sri Lanka release of 47 Indian fishermen**, who had been in Sri Lankan custody, in recent weeks.
- **Soft power and cultural diplomacy:**
 - Joint promotion of religious tourism under **Buddhist circuit** and **Ramayana Trail** with infrastructure support, digital platforms, and diaspora engagement.
 - **Indian Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan** announced that the **OCI card**, a multiple entry life long visa extended to foreign nationals of Indian origin, would now be **extended to sixth generation Indian-origin Sri Lankans**.
- **Effective utilization of institutions:**
 - like **BIMSTEC** and Indian Ocean Rim Association (**IORA**) to create common positions on regional maritime security, climate change, and economic integration.

- **Operate within the established framework-**

- India's relationship with Sri Lanka is framed within **India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and 'SAGAR' framework**.
- Both the nations, must aim to work within the laid down framework.

Mains Practise Question

"Discuss the strategic significance of Sri Lanka for India. How do economic cooperation, domestic politics in Sri Lanka, and external powers shape contemporary India-Sri Lanka relations?"

(15 Marks, 250 words)



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Polity
Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number :** 12



Lenskart apologises with new guide after online backlash

Following massive online backlash over a purported internal grooming document, eyewear retailer Lenskart has issued a public apology and released a standardised 'In-Store Style Guide' that allows employees to wear religious and cultural symbols at work. The new policy "explicitly and unambiguously" welcomes all symbols of faith carried by team members, including the bindi, tilak, sindoor, kalawa, mangalsutra, kada, hijab, and turban. Addressing the uproar a few days ago, Lenskart founder Peyush Bansal had stepped in to clarify that the viral document was an "outdated version" and did not reflect the company's current stance. PTI

Indian Model of Secularism vs Western Model

- **Constitutional basis:**
 - Preamble & Article 25 - 28
- **Based on "principled distance" v/s "Strict Neutrality"**
 - **State led Religious reforms:** e.g. banning triple talaq

- **State overseas religious affairs:**
 - Waqf board, Temple management committee
- **Religious Expression:**
 - **Permits religious symbols:** Sikhs wearing turban
 - **Religious holidays:** Eid, diwali, Holi, christmas
 - **Western Model:**
 - Secular calendar & bans religious symbols in public institutions
- **Legal system:**
 - **India:** Separate Personal laws for religious communities
 - **Western:** Uniform Civil code

Minority Rights:

- **India:**
 - **Article 30:** Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.
 - **Article 28:** In educational institutions that are not wholly maintained by state funds, religious instruction is allowed.
- **Western:** Strictly secular public education



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Science and Technology
Newspaper: The Hindu **Page Number :** 09

About Project Glasswing

- It is a collaborative **cybersecurity initiative led by Anthropic** to strengthen global software security using advanced AI.
- **Multi-company coalition:** Amazon Web Services, Apple, Broadcom, Cisco, CrowdStrike, Google, JPMorgan Chase, the Linux Foundation, Microsoft, Nvidia, and Palo Alto Networks - **critical infrastructure organisations.**
- **Aim:** The project aims at **securing critical global software infrastructure** using advanced AI models like **Claude Mythos Preview.**
- **Working mechanism:** autonomously discover **zero-day vulnerabilities** and generate code to fix them, even in complex systems..
- **Zero-day vulnerabilities:**
 - a flaw in software that nobody knew existed until someone spots it, and so **developers have zero days to fix it.**
E.g. WannaCry attack (2017).
 - An **“exploit”** is the **actual weapon built from that flaw**, a piece of code that lets an attacker break into a system, steal data, or crash critical services.

- **How it Works?:** Unlike **traditional security scanners** that follow **rigid patterns**, **Claude Mythos** utilizes **autonomous reasoning** to understand the underlying logic of an operating system or browser.
- ◆ **Deconstruct Code:** Read through millions of lines of code in seconds.
 - ◆ **Simulate Exploits:** Reason through how a specific flaw could be manipulated to bypass security.
 - ◆ **Autonomous Discovery:** Identify thousands of bugs across different platforms with minimal human supervision, operating at roughly **ten times the speed** of previous automated tools.
 - ◆ It identified a **27-year-old flaw in OpenBSD**, an operating system specifically built with security as its primary design principle & **16-year-old bug in FFmpeg**, a video processing library.
- **Controlled access:** The model is restricted to a **closed group to prevent misuse.**
- ◆ **Concerns:** concentration of cybersecurity power in a handful of firms
 - rest of the world’s ability to secure its digital infrastructure increasingly runs through their products, their platforms, and their decisions about who gets access to what.



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Science and Technology
Newspaper: The Indian Express **Page Number :** 13

Odisha kicks off India's 1st 3D chip packaging plant

Soumyarendra Barik
Bhubaneswar, April 19

ODISHA CM Mohan Charan Majhi and Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw laid the foundation stone for India's first advanced 3D chip packaging unit in Bhubaneswar, in a big boost to India's growing semiconductor ambitions.

The project is being implemented by the US-based 3D Glass Solutions Inc through its wholly owned Indian subsidiary Heterogeneous Integration Packaging Solutions Pvt Ltd. It is

funded by Intel, among others. Intel's CEO Lip-Bu Tan joined the ceremony virtually.

Majhi said the unit, whose Rs 1,934 crore proposal had received approval under the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) last year, is expected to produce 70,000 glass panels annually, along with 50 million assembled units. It is among the two plants in the state that had received approval under the ISM and around 13,000 advanced 3DHI modules, Majhi said. The project will generate around 2,500 direct and indirect jobs.

3D glass semiconductor technology is an advanced chip process that utilises specialised glass substrates to enable high-performance, three-dimensional integration of electrical components. Unlike traditional silicon, glass offers superior radio frequency performance, lower electrical loss, and enhanced thermal stability for passive component integration. The plant will assemble and package these chips.

Vaishnaw called the plant's groundbreaking a "historic" day for Odisha, adding that it

marked a shift away from the usual industries that it has been associated with. "It's very important for Odisha to have a world-class, latest technology industry here. Odisha is now becoming an IT hub (and) an electronics manufacturing hub. For years, industries like mining, metal and power have existed in the state, but now it is taking steps towards the high-tech industry."

(The reporter was in Bhubaneswar at the invite of the Ministry of Electronics and IT)

FULL REPORT ON

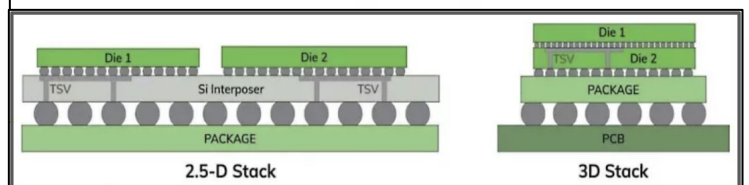
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

About Advanced semiconductor packaging

- **Advanced semiconductor packaging** is a collection of manufacturing processes combining multiple semiconductor chips into a single electronics package. This approach increases capability and reduces power consumption and cost.
- **3D-IC or three-dimensional integrated circuits:** is an innovative semiconductor packaging technology that enables the **vertical stacking of multiple chips (or dies)** (on top of each other) instead of being spread out flat on a single layer..
- They are connected using very fine vertical wires called through-silicon vias.
- This allows chips to communicate faster and use less power

→ Significance:

- ◆ **Faster performance** → shorter distance between components
- ◆ **Less power consumption** → efficient connections
- ◆ **Smaller size** → more power in less space (important for phones, AI chips)



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Economy
Newspaper: The Indian Express Page Number : 13

CSR push: Listed firms' spending jumps 23% in FY25 on robust profits

George Mathew & Sandeep Singh

Mumbai/New Delhi, April 19

CORPORATES ARE no longer just chasing profits — they're also investing in the brighter side of society, channelling their success into meaningful social upliftment while continuing to thrive in business.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) spending by companies listed on stock exchanges registered a sharp rise of 23% in FY25, reaching Rs 22,212 crore compared with Rs 18,011 crore in the previous financial year. The increase has been attributed largely to robust corporate profitability.

Pranav Haldea, MD of PRIME Database Group, said the surge in CSR expenditure was driven by a significant 22% growth in the average net profits of these companies over the preceding three years. Under existing regulations,

• Top 10 CSR spenders (FY25; Rs in crore)

COMPANY	CSR EXPENDITURE
RELIANCE INDUSTRIES	1,309.50
HDFC BANK	1,068.03
TCS	960.00
ONGC	929.08
ICICI BANK	801.12
TATA STEEL	584.61
INDIAN OIL CORP	583.03
INFOSYS	526.26
ITC LTD	461.50
NTPC LTD	362.94

SOURCE: PRIMEINFOBASE.COM

commitments. Nearly 934 firms, representing 70% of the total, increased their spending compared to the previous year. While 438 firms, or 28%, spent exactly the prescribed amount, 751 firms — nearly 48% — exceeded the mandatory requirement. Notably, 28 companies

cial thresholds are required to allocate at least two per cent of their average net profits towards CSR initiatives.

The latest rise follows a 16% increase in CSR spending recorded in FY24, marking a period of strong recovery after nearly four years of stagnation. CSR outlays had remained relatively flat between 2019-20 and 2022-23, inching up marginally from Rs 14,776 crore to Rs 15,561 crore during that time, according to data compiled by PRIME Database Group.

The number of firms undertaking CSR activities also increased during the year. Of the 1,549 firms mandated to spend on CSR, as many as 1,521, or 98%, reported such expenditure in FY25, up from 1,372 in FY24. However, 28 companies failed to spend any amount despite being under obligation, it said.

It said a majority of companies stepped up their CSR

incurring losses during the year. Sector-wise, education continued to attract the highest allocation, with Rs 1,137 crore directed towards educational initiatives.

Healthcare followed as the second-largest area of focus, receiving Rs 840 crore. In contrast, sectors such as slum development, support for armed forces veterans, and disaster management continued to see minimal or negligible funding, Prime Database said. The CSR framework in India, which came into effect in April 2014, mandates eligible companies to spend two per cent of their average net profits over the previous three financial years on CSR activities. It applies to firms with a net worth of Rs 500 crore or more, turnover of Rs 1,000 crore or more, or net profit of Rs 5 crore or more.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

About CSR

- **Aim:** To integrates social and environmental considerations into business operations.
- CSR framework in India, which came into effect in April 2014.
- It is established by **Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013**, which mandates eligible companies to contribute towards societal development.

- **Eligibility Criteria for CSR:** The CSR law applies to companies that meet any of the following criteria:
 - a net worth of ₹500 crore or more, an annual turnover of ₹1,000 crore or more, or a net profit of ₹5 crore or more in the previous financial year.
- **CSR Spend Requirement:** Eligible companies must allocate **at least 2% of their average net profit** from the **previous 3 years** towards CSR activities.
- **2019 Amendment:**
 - **Prior to 2019**, unspent CSR funds could be carried forward to the next fiscal.



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Economy

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- **Post-amendment**, unspent funds must be transferred to a specified **Schedule VII fund by the end of the fiscal year** and utilized within three years, failing which, they must be deposited in a government-specified fund.

PYQ (2024)

With reference to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) rules in India,

consider the following statements:

1. CSR rules specify that expenditures that benefit the company directly or its employees will not be considered as CSR activities.
2. CSR rules do not specify minimum spending on CSR activities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2



Workers' protests are not law and order issues, but a cry for dignity



NIKHIL DEY

WHEN WORKERS walk out of their factories and shop floors, not to negotiate, but to pick up stones and set fire to their workplaces, we must recognise the breakdown that stares at us. Such violence is a desperate signal that the worker no longer feels they have a stake in the enterprise's survival and aren't respected as human beings.

When this pattern repeats across industrial hubs — from **Manesar to Bhiwadi** — it is a systemic rejection of a policy framework that has pushed India's working class beyond the point of precarity.

When we look past the smoke of conspiracy fanned by the state, we find workers earning barely enough to feed themselves, let alone the families they left behind in rural India, to fuel the city and the nation's growth: **Rs 10,000 a month in the National Capital Region is not a living wage; it's not even a minimum wage** — it is a starvation wage. Workers are being forced into what the Supreme Court has rightly termed "conditions of forced labour".

The new labour codes officially took effect on April 1 with the promise that they would "modernise" our economy. However, for 90 per cent of India's workforce, these codes have merely formalised a pro-capitalist, anti-labour paradigm that has existed informally for decades. They prioritise the "ease of doing business" over the "ease of labouring". By dismantling existing statutes, the state has given legal cover to unregulated work.



Living Wage v/s minimum wage



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Economy

Newspaper: The Indian express **Page Number :** 11

Difference b/w Minimum, Fair & Living Wage

Aspect	Minimum Wage	Fair Wage	Living Wage
Basic Idea	Lowest legally allowed wage	Wage above minimum but below living wage	Wage sufficient for a decent standard of living
Purpose	Prevent exploitation of workers	Ensure equitable share in economic progress	Ensure a dignified life with comfort
Determination Basis	Set by government law (like Minimum Wages Act, 1948)	Depends on industry capacity to pay + productivity	Based on needs of worker and family
Level of Income	Bare subsistence (food, basic needs)	Moderate standard of living	Good standard of living (education, health, savings, social security)
Flexibility	Fixed by law; varies by state/sector	Flexible; varies with industry conditions	Ideal concept; not strictly enforced everywhere (Article 43)
Focus	Survival	Fairness	Dignity and well-being



Living Wage v/s minimum wage



SYLLABUS : Prelims: Economy

Newspaper: The Indian express Page Number : 11

To understand why the "6th largest economy with a 6-7 per cent growth rate" is shaking at the roots, we must examine three critical constituents of workers' rights: The fixing and enforcement of minimum wages. The breach of statutory minimum wage norms is rampant. In Rajasthan, wages have remained stagnant for three years. Nationally, the recommendations of the 2019 Anoop Satpathy Committee — which suggested a floor of Rs 375 per day (at 2018 prices) with a monthly housing allowance for urban workers — remain ignored. With MGNREGA undermined,



one of the most important safeguards against rural destitution, urban areas are also facing a worsening job crisis. Transition to the new VBGRAMG scheme will enforce a "blackout period" of two months, with the clear objective of undermining the bargaining power of workers at the only point where they can negotiate for better wages. For the first time in 15 years, the financial year has begun without adjusting the MGNREGA wages for inflation.

Second, the sanctity of the eight-hour working day has gone. Workers are routinely coerced into extra hours without overtime pay. While the government may issue post-unrest orders for "double pay", one must ask: Why does it require a riot to enforce an existing law?

Third, the labour codes have built formidable hurdles against collective bargaining. The state governments' immediate reaction to the Noida unrest was to round up the few union leaders they could find and detain them. Unions are the only platform for workers' voices — safety valves of industrial concerns. Without them, protests may become unorganised, unpredictable and volatile. When an employer treats the relationship with each worker as purely transactional, they shouldn't be surprised when the worker's response is equally cynical.

This rot extends into the digital "gig" economy, where workers are atomised through individual micro-contracts. They work for people who refuse to see themselves as employers. Workers are lured into taking up "gig" work for what they think will be a short stint. They end up without an exit, facing the same crushing pressure of work and wages: Shorter delivery times, dwindling pay, and no grievance redress. The labour codes pay lip service to social security protection through impractical and inadequate schemes, while the central government collaborates with aggregators to even try to block state legislation.

The pandemic should have been our great warning. We watched millions walk home when we shut our cities on them. When they returned, driven by the same precarity that forced them away, they hoped for security. Instead, they found escalating costs and stagnant pay. The skyrocketing price of gas cylinders has been called the "last straw". While the affluent switch to induction stoves, the worker is left with a choice between hunger and rage.



Q1. With reference to the concept of secularism in India, consider the following statements:

1. Indian secularism is based on the principle of “principled distance” rather than strict neutrality.
2. The Indian State completely refrains from intervening in the religious practices of communities.

Which of the statements given above is/are not correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: b

Q 2. With reference to Project Glasswing, consider the following statements:

1. It is a cybersecurity initiative led by Google to secure global software infrastructure.
2. The project enables open public access to its AI model for identifying and exploiting vulnerabilities.
3. It uses autonomous reasoning to detect and fix vulnerabilities

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: a

Q3. With reference to Three-dimensional integrated circuits (3D-IC), consider the following statements:

1. It involves vertical stacking of semiconductor dies connected using through-silicon vias.
2. It reduces the distance between components, thereby increasing the speed of communication.
3. It contributes to reduced power consumption and compact device design.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: c

Q4. With reference to the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) framework in India, consider the following statements:

1. The obligation applies only to companies with a net profit of ₹5 crore or more in the previous financial year.
2. Eligible companies are required to spend at least 5% of their average net profits over the previous three years on CSR activities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: d

Q5. With reference to the concepts of Minimum Wage, Fair Wage and Living Wage, consider the following statements:

1. Minimum wage is legally mandated and aims to ensure bare subsistence for workers.
2. Fair wage is determined solely based on the needs of workers and their families.
3. Living wage, as envisaged under Article 43 of the Constitution, aims at ensuring a dignified standard of life.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: c





VAJIRAM & RAVI

Institute for IAS Examination

A unit of Vajiram & Ravi IAS Study Centre LLP

9-B, Bada Bazar Marg, Old Rajinder Nagar,
New Delhi - 110060 • Ph.: 41007400, 41007500

New No. 62, P Block, 6th Avenue, Anna Nagar,
Chennai - 600040 • Ph.: 044-4330-2121

Visit us at : www.vajiramandravi.com