

### GENDER WAGE GAP IN INDIA - INSIGHTS FROM PLFS 2025

- The Gender Wage Gap refers to the difference in earnings between men and women for similar work or across sectors.
- In India, this gap reflects structural inequalities in employment opportunities, skill access, and labour market participation.
- **Nature of the Wage Gap**
  - Women earn less than men across all job categories.
  - The gap varies by type of employment, such as salaried jobs, casual labour, and self-employment.
  - Informal sector dominance and occupational segregation worsen the disparity.
- **Causes of Wage Inequality**
  - Lower female labour force participation.
  - Concentration of women in low-paying and informal jobs.
  - Limited access to education, skills, and capital.
  - Social norms and unpaid care responsibilities.
- **Significance**
  - Reducing the gender wage gap is essential for inclusive economic growth.
  - It enhances household incomes, boosts productivity, and improves gender equality outcomes.

### News Summary

- The PLFS 2025 data presents a mixed picture of progress and challenges in India's labour market, particularly with respect to gender-based wage disparities.
- **Employment Levels**
  - About 61.6 crore people were employed in India in 2025.
  - Male workers: 41.6 crore.
  - Female workers: 20.0 crore.

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- This indicates a significant gender gap in overall employment levels.
  - **Higher Wage Growth for Women**
    - According to the data, women's wages grew faster than men's across all job categories in 2025.
    - **Salaried jobs:** Women's wages grew by 7.2% compared to 5.8% for men.
    - **Self-employment:** Women's earnings rose by 8.8%, slightly higher than men's 8%.
    - **Casual labour:** Women's wages increased by 5.4%, while men's wages declined marginally by 0.2%.
    - This indicates a positive trend in wage growth for women, suggesting gradual improvements in labour market conditions.
  - **Persistent Wage Inequality**
    - Despite faster growth, the wage gap remains substantial.
    - In salaried jobs, women earned only 76% of male earnings.
    - In casual labour, women earned 69% of male wages.
    - In self-employment, women earned just 36% of what men earned.
    - This highlights that higher growth rates are not sufficient to bridge the existing disparity.
  - **Changes in Employment Structure**
    - The survey also shows improvements in the nature of employment.
    - The share of women in salaried jobs increased to 18.2% in 2025 from 16.6% in 2024.
    - Self-employment among women declined, indicating a shift toward better-quality jobs.
    - Casual labour participation also increased slightly.
    - Salaried jobs are considered more secure as they provide social security benefits and a stable income.
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### OLYMPICS TRANSGENDER POLICY: BAN, DEBATE, AND GLOBAL IMPACT

- The IOC, after consulting experts across multiple fields, emphasised that eligibility for the women's category should be based on **biological sex**, highlighting the need to clearly distinguish between “sex” and “gender”.

#### What is Biological Sex?

- Sex refers to biological differences such as reproductive organs and chromosomes.
- Humans typically have XX chromosomes (female) or XY chromosomes (male), though variations exist.
- Some individuals, such as those with **Disorders of Sex Development (DSDs)**, may not fit neatly into this binary, as seen in cases like athlete Caster Semenya.
  - Intersex individuals possess physical or genetic traits that do not align strictly with typical binary definitions of male or female.
  - As an example of a DSD, individuals with Swyer syndrome may have female reproductive organs despite carrying XY (typically male) chromosomes.
  - The text cites the high-profile case of Olympic athlete Caster Semenya, who has a DSD.
  - Her situation has sparked legal battles over sports regulations that require athletes with high natural testosterone to medically suppress those levels to compete in women's categories.
- **What is Gender?**
  - Gender is a social and personal identity — how individuals perceive themselves, such as male, female, or non-binary.
  - It may not always align with biological sex. For instance, a transgender woman may be biologically male but identifies as female.

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- **Key Difference**

- While sex is biological, determined by physical and genetic traits, gender is psychological and social, based on identity.
- This distinction lies at the heart of ongoing debates in sports eligibility policies.

### Why Gender Eligibility is Controversial in Women's Sports?

- The debate over gender eligibility in women's sports stems from the fact that modern sports are divided based on biological sex, as men generally possess physiological advantages over women.
  - **Role of Testosterone in Athletic Performance**
    - Testosterone, influenced by the **SRY gene on the Y chromosome**, is linked to greater muscle mass, strength, bone density, and haemoglobin levels.
    - Studies suggest this hormone largely explains performance differences between male and female athletes, with an estimated 10–20% advantage in certain sports.
    - While evidence supports testosterone's impact, it is not fully conclusive.
    - Critics argue that natural variations, such as higher testosterone in some women or genetic advantages like height or limb structure, complicate the fairness argument.
  - **Core of the Debate**
    - The central issue is whether athletes with higher natural testosterone levels—such as those with DSDs or transgender women—have an unfair advantage.
    - Some advocate restricting their participation to ensure fairness in women's sports.
    - The **IOC** maintains that allowing transgender and certain DSD athletes in women's categories may compromise fairness, safety, and competitive integrity, especially in sports dependent on strength, power, and endurance.
  - **Challenges of Alternative Solutions**
    - Proposals like creating an “open category” for transgender athletes face practical challenges due to the limited number of elite-level participants, making implementation difficult.
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### CENTRAL CONSUMER PROTECTION AUTHORITY



Recently, the Central Consumer Protection Authority directed hotels and restaurants not to levy additional charges, such as LPG charges and fuel cost recovery, on consumers.

- It was established under the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**.
- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 replaced the 1986 Act.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.

#### **Functions and Powers of CCPA:**

- The CCPA **protects, promotes, and enforces the rights** of consumers as a class under the Act.
- It **prevents unfair trade practices** and curbs false or misleading advertisements.
- It ensures that no one publishes or disseminates false or misleading advertisements.
- It can **initiate class-action suits**, including recall, refunds, and cancellation of licenses, when necessary.
- The CCPA can conduct inquiries and investigations through its Investigation Wing, headed by a Director-General.
- It can order the discontinuation of unfair practices, impose penalties on errant businesses, and enforce consumer welfare measures.

#### **Composition of CCPA:**

- A **Chief Commissioner** heads the CCPA and has two other commissioners:
- **One commissioner** deals with goods-related issues.
- The other commissioner handles service-related complaints.



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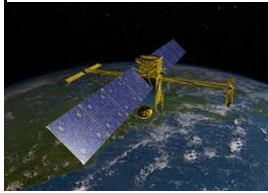
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### SWOT SATELLITE



Recently, NASA has developed a new map of the ocean floor by using satellite data from SWOT Satellite.

- The **Surface Water and Ocean Topography (SWOT)** satellite was launched in 2022.
- It is a joint mission of **NASA and CNES (French Space Agency)**.

**Objective:** Satellite will collect detailed measurements of **how water bodies on Earth change over time.**

#### Features SWOT Satellite:

- It uses a specialised instrument called the **Ka-band Radar Interferometer (KaRIn)** to measure the height, width, and elevation of surface water bodies such as rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and oceans.
- SWOT **offers high spatial resolution** by bouncing microwaves off water surfaces and calculating return time, allowing dynamic water movement tracking.
- The satellite covers over **55%** of large-scale global floods during their lifecycle through frequent Earth orbits.
- The satellite circles Earth and can scan about **90 per cent** of the **planet every 21 days**
- **Functions of SWOT Satellite:**
  - It is equipped to observe the entire length of nearly all rivers wider than 330 feet and more than 1 million lakes and reservoirs larger than 5 acres.
  - It will precisely measure fine differences in **surface elevations around smaller currents and eddies**, where much the oceans' drawdown of heat and carbon is believed to occur.



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### RURAL SELF EMPLOYMENT TRAINING INSTITUTES



- The Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs) are empowering rural youth through skill development and entrepreneurship promotion.
- RSETIs have emerged as key **institutions with a wide national outreach**, providing free residential training and facilitating sustainable livelihoods for rural youth.
- These are functioning through a **unique partnership between banks and government**,
- One RSETI is **established in every district** in the country. Concerned bank is the lead bank in the district takes responsibility for creating and managing it.
- **Eligibility:** RSETIs **provide short-duration**, practical, and residential training programs for **unemployed rural youth aged 18–50 years**.
- The institutes offer **73 NSQF-aligned courses** across sectors such as: Agriculture, Manufacturing, Services and Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDPs)
- These institutes not only impart skills but also ensure **post-training support** through **handholding and credit linkage**.
- **Recognition of RSETI trainees:** Certificates issued by an RSETI will be recognised by all banks for purposes of **extending credit to the trainees**.

### WASTE FOUNDRY SAND



- It is a **byproduct** from the production of both **ferrous and nonferrous metal castings**.
- It is high **quality silica sand**.
- The physical and chemical characteristics of foundry sand **depend upon the type** of casting process and the type of industries.
- Classification of foundry sands depends **upon the type of binder systems** used in metal casting.



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- Two types of binder systems are generally used, and on the basis of that foundry sands are categorized as: **clay-bonded sands** (green sand) and **chemically bonded sands**.
- **Waste Foundry Sand** poses environmental challenges due to its large-scale generation and disposal requirements.
- **Significance:** Its reuse aligns with national priorities on resource efficiency, waste minimization, and sustainable development.

### COFFEE



coffee exports.

**India's coffee exports to West Asian markets are now stranded at ports or slowly moving via the Strait of Hormuz which is impacting**

- It is a **tropical plant** generally grown under shady trees.
- **Types of Coffee:** Robusta and Arabica
- **Major Coffee growing states:** It is largely cultivated in **Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha**, among which, **Karnataka produces the most** with over **70% of the total output**.
- Europe is the top destination for India's coffee exports.
- The major countries which import the commodity from India include Italy, Germany, Belgium, Middle East nations, Korea, and Japan.
- **Required Climatic Conditions for Coffee Cultivation**
  - It is **grown on hill slopes** at elevations from 600 to 1,600 metres above sea level.
  - **Climate:** It requires a hot and humid climate for its growth.
  - **Temperature:** 15°C and 28 °C
  - Rainfall: It requires 150 to 250 cm of rainfall.
  - **Soil: Well-drained, loamy soil** containing a good deal of humus and minerals like iron and calcium are ideal for coffee cultivation.
  - **Dry weather** is necessary at the time of ripening of the berries.



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### CORINGA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



- **Location:** It is located in **Andhra Pradesh**.
- It is **part of the Godavari estuary**, where the Coringa river confluences into the Bay of Bengal.
- It was established as a wildlife sanctuary **in 1978**.
- **Vegetation:** It has extensive **mangrove and dry deciduous tropical forests**. It is the second-largest stretch of mangrove forests in India.
- **Flora:** Mangrove plants like *Rhizophora* spp, *Avicennia* spp, *Sonneratia* spp, etc; grow here.
- **Fauna:** It is home to endangered mammals like **Smooth Indian otter, Fishing cat, Jackal**, etc. Mangroves offer excellent habitat for birds like **Black capped kingfisher, Brahminy kite, Sea gulls, Reef heron, Sand piper**, etc.
- The sea coast of the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary is a breeding ground for **Olive ridley turtles**.

### Key Facts about Olive Ridley Turtles:

- It gets its name from the olive green **colouration of its carapace (shell)**.
- It is best known for its unique **mass nesting, called Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.
- **Distribution of Olive Ridley Turtle**
  - They are mainly found in the warm waters of **the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans**.
  - Odisha's Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary is known as the world's largest rookery (a colony of breeding animals) of sea turtles.
  - **Conservation Status of Olive Ridley Turtle**
    - **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
    - **CITES:** Appendix I
    - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule 1