

### WOMEN IN CORPORATE LEADERSHIP, THE LIVED REALITY

- Every year, International Women’s Day serves as a reminder of the progress made toward gender equality while also highlighting the ongoing challenges women face in professional spaces.
- Despite corporate efforts to project an inclusive image, the reality of women in the workforce, especially in leadership roles, paints a starkly different picture.
- Therefore, it is crucial to examine the barriers that hinder women’s participation in leadership roles, the role of legal mandates in gender diversity, the benefits of women in leadership, and the necessity of real empowerment rather than symbolic inclusion.

#### The Challenges of Women’s Participation in the Workforce

- **Limited Opportunities for Advancement**
  - Women are often underrepresented in middle and senior management roles, leading to a phenomenon known as the ‘broken rung.’
  - The lack of women in middle management creates a leadership pipeline issue, further reducing their presence in executive roles.
- **Preference for Male Leadership Traits**
  - Corporate cultures often value leadership traits traditionally associated with men, such as assertiveness and competitiveness, over those associated with women, such as collaboration and empathy.
  - This bias can result in fewer women being considered for senior leadership positions, even when they possess the necessary skills and experience.
- **Glass Ceiling Effect**
  - It refers to the invisible but real barriers that prevent women from advancing beyond a certain level in an organisation.
  - While entry-level hiring may provide women with initial opportunities, these efforts often do not translate into leadership positions due to institutional resistance and deeply ingrained workplace biases.

- **Unconscious Bias and Stereotypes**
  - Women frequently face **unconscious biases** that question their capabilities, leadership potential, and commitment to their jobs.
  - For example, **women who exhibit strong leadership qualities may be perceived as ‘too aggressive’ or ‘bossy,’** while those who adopt a collaborative approach may be seen as lacking authority.
- **The Motherhood Penalty**
  - One of the biggest challenges for women in the workforce is the **motherhood penalty, where working mothers face discrimination in hiring, promotions, and pay.**
  - **Employers may assume that women with children are less committed to their jobs,** leading to fewer opportunities for career advancement.
- **The Way Forward: Moving Beyond Token Representation**
  - The **true measure of progress lies in the actual influence** and decision-making power granted to women in leadership roles.
  - **Token appointments, where women are placed in positions without real authority,** do little to advance gender equality.
  - Instead, **companies must ensure that women occupy executive roles, serve as independent directors,** and lead critical board committees.
  - Another key factor in achieving genuine equality is pay parity. **Women must be compensated at the same level as their male counterparts,** reflecting their contributions and responsibilities.
  - Without equitable pay, **gender diversity initiatives remain superficial and fail to create lasting change.**

**Legal mandates have played a crucial role in developing gender diversity,** but true progress requires organizations to actively support and empower women in leadership positions.



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### AI KOSHA



The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) launched AI Kosha, a non-personal datasets platform, along with the GPU access portal under the IndiaAI Mission.

- AI Kosha is an initiative by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** (MeitY) designed to serve as a **unified repository for datasets, tools, and AI models**.
- It aims to enhance access to datasets and models from various sources to **boost AI innovation**, support AI solution development with shared toolkits, and showcase use cases to inspire new applications.
- It serves as a central repository, offering over 300 datasets, 80+ models, and diverse AI use cases.
- It also features an **AI sandbox** with an integrated development environment, tools, and tutorials.
- Key security measures include content discoverability, AI readiness scoring, permission-based access, data encryption, secure APIs, and real-time firewalls to ensure safe and efficient AI development.

What is the IndiaAI Mission?

- The IndiaAI Mission is a comprehensive initiative launched by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (**MeitY**) to build a **robust AI ecosystem in India**.
- The IndiaAI Mission, with an allocation of Rs. 10,300 crore (US\$ 1.18 billion) over five years, is building a high-performance computing infrastructure with 18,693 **Graphics Processing Units** (GPUs) and launching an open GPU marketplace to empower startups, students, and researchers.

### PASHU AUSHADHI KENDRAS



The government will launch "Pashu Aushadhi" stores nationwide to provide affordable generic veterinary medicines. This initiative is part of the revised Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme (LHDCP), approved by the Union Cabinet headed by PM Modi.

The Pashu Aushadhi stores will be managed by **cooperative societies** and **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samridhhi Kendras (PMKSK)**. The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying will soon release operational guidelines for these stores.

#### **Pashu Aushadhi Initiative Based on Janaushadhi Kendras**

- The Pashu Aushadhi initiative is modeled after the Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Kendras (PMBJKs), which offer affordable generic medicines to reduce healthcare costs for citizens.
- **Existing Janaushadhi Kendras**
  - Currently, over 10,300 PMBJKs operate across India under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers.
  - The country will observe Janaushadhi Diwas on March 7.
- **Generic Medicines for Animals**
  - While PMBJKs provide generic medicines for humans, Pashu Aushadhi Kendras will offer non-branded, cost-effective veterinary medicines for animal healthcare.

#### **Pashu Aushadhi to Improve Livestock Health**

- Recently, the Union Cabinet, chaired by PM Modi, has approved the revision of the Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme (LHDCP) to enhance animal healthcare and disease prevention.
  - The Pashu Aushadhi initiative is a key part of the revised LHDCP.

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### Objectives and Benefits of LHDCP

- **Disease Prevention** – Controls Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Brucellosis, PPR, Classical Swine Fever, Lumpy Skin Disease, etc., through vaccination and immunization.
- **Livestock Healthcare** – Enhances disease surveillance and strengthens veterinary infrastructure.
- **Economic and Social Impact** – Boosts livestock productivity, prevents economic losses for farmers, generates rural employment, and promotes entrepreneurship in the veterinary sector.

### Significance of Pashu Aushadhi

- As per the 20th Livestock Census (2019), India's livestock population stands at 535.78 million, including 302.79 million bovines (cattle, buffalo, mithun, and yak).
- **Impact of Livestock Diseases**
  - Various diseases like Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Brucellosis, Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF), and Lumpy Skin Disease significantly reduce livestock productivity.
  - While vaccination drives have been implemented, farmers still face high out-of-pocket expenses on medicines for their animals.

### Pashu Aushadhi Kendras to Offer Traditional Medicines

- Apart from generic veterinary medicines, Pashu Aushadhi Kendras will also sell **ethnoveterinary medicines**, which are based on traditional beliefs and indigenous knowledge to treat animal disease
    - Ethnoveterinary formulations use natural ingredients such as coriander, garlic, bay leaves, pepper, cumin, turmeric, chirata, betel, tulsi, neem, sweet basil, jaggery, and onions for treating conditions like fever in animals.
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### WHO IS A D-VOTER?



- D-voters or doubtful voters, are a category of voters in Assam who couldn't give evidence to prove their Indian nationality and whose cases are pending with the Foreigners Tribunals or who have been declared foreigners by the Tribunal.
- The D-voter category was introduced by the Election Commission of India in 1997.
- Because their Indian citizenship has not been verified, doubtful voters are not allowed to vote in elections.
- They are also not permitted to run for office in the nation's elections.
- However, 'doubtful voter' or 'doubtful citizenship' have not been defined in the Citizenship Act, 1955, or the Citizenship Rules of 2003.
- The Citizenship Rules, 2003, was framed under the provisions of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003.
- The rules framed in 2003 list out the steps to be followed for the preparation of the National Population Register (NPR) and the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC).
- It has only been stated that the Local Registrar will include the details of individuals whose citizenship is in doubt with an "appropriate remark in the population register for further enquiry" under subsection 4 of section 4, which deals with the production of the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC).
- A family or individual is notified in a specific pro forma as soon as the verification process concludes, whether they have been classified as a dubious citizen (D-Category).
- Before deciding whether or not to add their name to the register, they are also given the opportunity to be heard by the Taluk or Sub-district Registrar of Citizenship.
- The Registrar has ninety days to complete and justify his findings.
- The marking as a doubtful voter is a temporary measure and cannot be prolonged. Within a specific timeframe, a decision needs to be made.



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- According to the documentation provided, if it is determined that the individual is a foreign national or an illegal immigrant, they may be deported in a detention centre.
- D-voters can also apply to have their names added to the NRC.
- They will be included only after they get clearance from the Foreigners Tribunals and their names are removed from electoral rolls under the 'D' category.

### WHAT IS PARVATMALA PARIYOJANA?



- The National Ropeways Development Programme, known as the 'Parvatmala Pariyojana', was announced in the 2022-23 Union Budget.
- Under the Parvatmala Pariyojana, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways envisages the provision of safe, economical, convenient, efficient, self-sustainable & world-class ropeway infrastructure providing first- and last-mile connectivity to improve logistics efficiency in India.
- The programme aims to improve connectivity and convenience for commuters in hilly regions and to decongest urban areas where the conventional mode of transport is saturated or not feasible.
- The aim is to improve connectivity and convenience for commuters, besides promoting tourism.
- For the development of ropeway infrastructure in dense forests, in urban areas, and in difficult terrains, the ministry is collaborating with various state governments/UT administrations.
- The Centre has identified more than 200 projects at a cost of Rs 1.25 lakh crore under the programme.
- The projects are being implemented through Public-Private Partnership with around 60% contribution support by the Government of India.

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Implementing Agency:

- The National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML) has been mandated by the ministry to implement the project.
  - It is a 100% owned SPV of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).
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### THE DELIMITATION DEBATE - BALANCING REPRESENTATION AND FEDERALISM

- The delimitation issue has resurfaced as a **contentious political debate**.
- **Southern states**, particularly Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, have raised **concerns** over the **potential impact of population-based representation**.
- The debate is intertwined with **North-South demographic differences** and **political power distribution**.

#### **The Core Issue - Population-Based Representation:**

- The upcoming delimitation exercise **could reduce the South's representation** in the Lok Sabha due to lower population growth.
- Southern states have historically performed **better** in the Human Development Index (HDI) and economic indicators.
- **The demand to freeze the current strength** of each state in the Lok Sabha is gaining traction.

#### **North-South Divide and Political Tensions:**

- Southern leaders argue that population-based representation would disadvantage them despite their progressive policies.
- **The push for Hindi and perceived centralization** by the Centre fuels regional tensions.
- However, concerns of **North Indian domination in Parliament** remain debatable as numerical advantage have not necessarily translated into policy bias.

#### **Challenges in Finding a Consensus:**

- **Freezing the current representation ratio** maintains the **balance** but leads to **overburdened** representatives (approx. 20 lakh people per MP).





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- **Avoiding the North-South binary** is crucial to prevent further polarization.
- The BJP and Congress face internal contradictions as their state units take opposing stands.

### Potential Solutions:

- A **strict population-based delimitation** could lead to numerical imbalances but aligns with **constitutional principles**.
- An **alternative approach is to expand the Lok Sabha**, ensuring no state loses seats while populous states gain additional representation.
- **Reforming the Rajya Sabha** to enhance federal representation could be another option, though it requires constitutional amendments.

### Federalism and Democratic Representation:

- **Democracy** should be interpreted **beyond numbers** to include federal balance.
- **Past delimitation exercises** have implicitly recognized this by ensuring small states have at least one Lok Sabha member.
- **Expanding the Lok Sabha can strengthen federalism** while upholding democratic principles.

### Way Ahead:

- For a genuine debate on the delimitation question, it is necessary to **avoid two tempting myths**.
  - **In the first place**, many intellectuals and politicians from the South are tempted to raise alarms about North India's dominance over the South.
  - **Secondly**, in the present party-political arena, there is a temptation to see the issue through the prism of the BJP's dominance.
    - The recent statement by the Union Home Minister that states of the South will not lose any seats highlights the extent of **anti-BJP sentiment on this matter**.
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