



Women, Business and the Law 2024

For Prelims: [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#), Gender Gap, Women, Business and the Law 2024, [World Bank \(WB\)](#).

For Mains: Women, Business and the Law 2024, Issues Related to Women in India and world and its effect on development of Human Resource.

Source: DTE

Why in News?

Recently, the [World Bank \(WB\)](#) Group has released a report titled-**Women, Business and the Law 2024**, presenting in-depth analysis of the **challenges obstructing women's entry into the global workforce**, hindering their ability to contribute to prosperity for themselves, their families and their communities.

What is Women Business and Law 2024 Report?

- Its indexes align **areas of the law and public policy** instruments with the economic decisions that women make throughout their lives and careers, identifying where and in what areas women continue to face hurdles.
- **Indicators:** It has 10 indicators- Safety, Mobility, Workplace, Pay, Child Care, Marriage, Parenthood, Entrepreneurship, Assets, and Pension.
 - **Safety from violence and access to childcare services** are very crucial indicators.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Legal Frameworks Index:**
 - Among the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#) high-income economies, 11 scored 90 or above, with **Italy leading at 95, followed by New Zealand** and Portugal with 92.5.
 - By **contrast**, more than 37 economies **provide women with less than half of the legal rights** enjoyed by men, affecting approximately half a billion women. Notably, high-income economies have **an average score of 75.4**.
 - Upper-middle-income economies follow closely, with an average score of 66.8. The gap in scores between the highest- and lowest scoring economies is most pronounced in high-income economies, with a substantial difference of 75 points.
- **Women Enjoy Fewer Legal Rights than Men:**
 - Women around the world **enjoy only 64% of the legal protections** that men do, when legal differences involving violence and childcare are taken into account. This is even **lower than the previous estimate of 77%**.
- **Gap Between Legal Reforms and Actual Outcomes for Women:**
 - Even though many countries have enacted laws promoting gender equality, there is a **significant gap between these laws** and the actual experiences of women.

- **98 economies have enacted legislation** mandating equal pay for women for work of equal value.
 - Yet **only 35 economies**, fewer than one out of every five, have adopted pay-transparency **measures to address the pay gap**.
- **Poor Performances by the Countries:**
 - **Togo** has been a **standout among Sub-Saharan economies**, enacting laws that give women roughly 77% of the rights available to men, more than any other country in the continent.
 - Yet Togo, so far, has **established only 27% of systems necessary for full implementation**.
 - This rate is average for Sub-Saharan economies.
 - In 2023, governments were assertive in advancing **three categories** of legal equal-opportunity reforms, **Pay, Parental Rights, and workplace protections**.
 - Still, nearly **all countries performed poorly** in the two categories being tracked for the first time—**access to childcare and women's safety**.
- **Women's Safety:**
 - The **greatest weakness is in women's safety**, with the global average score being **just 36**. Women have **barely a third of the necessary legal protections** against domestic violence, sexual harassment, child marriage, and femicide.
 - Although 151 economies have laws in place [prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace](#), **just 39 have laws prohibiting it in public spaces**. This often prevents women from using public transportation to get to work.
- **Childcare:**
 - Women spend an average of **2.4 more hours a day** on unpaid care work than men, much of it on the care of children.
 - Only 78 economies, fewer than half, provide **some financial or tax support for parents** with young children.
 - **Only 62 economies**—fewer than a third—have **quality standards governing childcare services**, without which women might think twice about going to work while they have children in their care.
- **Significant Obstacles for Women:**
 - Women face significant obstacles in other areas. In the area of **entrepreneurship**, for example, just **one in every five economies** mandates gender-sensitive criteria for public procurement processes, meaning **women are largely cut out of a USD 10-trillion-a-year economic opportunity**.
 - In the area of pay, **women earn just 77 cents for every USD 1 paid to men**. The rights gap extends all the way to retirement. In 62 economies, the ages at which men and women can retire are not the same.
 - Women tend to live longer than men, but because they receive lower pay while they work, **take time off when they have children**, and retire earlier, they end up with smaller pension benefits and greater financial insecurity in old age.

How did India Perform in Women, Business and the Law 2024 Report?

- India's rank has marginally **improved to 113, with a score of 74.4%**. While the country's score has remained constant since 2021, its ranking witnessed a **decline from 122 in 2021 to 125 in 2022** and further to 126 in the 2023 index.
- Indian women have **just 60% of the legal rights compared to men**, slightly below the global average of 64.2%.
 - However, India **outperformed its South Asian counterparts**, where women have only 45.9% of the legal protections enjoyed by men.
- When it comes to constraints on freedom of movement and constraints related to marriage, **India got a full score**.
- India receives **one of its lowest scores** in the indicator evaluating **laws impacting women's pay**.
 - To enhance this aspect India could explore **measures such as mandating equal pay for equivalent work**, permitting women to work at night on par with men and enabling women to engage in industrial jobs on an equal footing with men.
- When it comes to **supportive frameworks**, **India scored higher** than both the global and South

Asian averages.

What are the Recommendations of the Report?

- **Eliminating discriminatory laws and practices** hindering women from working or initiating businesses could **result in a more than 20% increase in global [gross domestic product](#)**.
 - It has the potential **to double the rate of global growth** in the upcoming decade.
- Effective implementation of equal-opportunity laws depends on an **adequate supporting framework**, including strong enforcement mechanisms, a system for tracking gender-related pay disparities, and the **availability of healthcare services** for women who survive violence.
- It is more urgent than ever **to accelerate efforts to reform laws** and enact public policies that **empower women to work** and start and grow businesses.
- Increasing **women's economic participation** is the key to amplifying their voices and **shaping decisions that affect them directly**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q.1 India's ranking in the 'Ease of Doing Business Index' is sometimes seen in the news. Which of the following has declared that ranking? (2016)

- (a) Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- (b) World Economic Forum
- (c) World Bank
- (d) World Trade Organization (WTO)

Ans: (c)

Q.2 Which one of the following issues the 'Global Economic Prospects' report periodically? (2015)

- (a) The Asian Development Bank
- (b) The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- (c) The US Federal Reserve Bank
- (d) The World Bank

Ans: (d)

Q.3 Which of the following organizations brings out the publication known as 'World Economic Outlook'? (2014)

- (a) The International Monetary Fund
- (b) The United Nations Development Programme
- (c) The World Economic Forum
- (d) The World Bank

Ans: (a)

Q.4 'BioCarbon Fund Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes' is managed by the (2015)

- (a) Asian Development Bank
- (b) International Monetary Fund
- (c) United Nations Environment Program
- (d) World Bank

Ans: (d)

Mains:

Q.1 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)**

Q.2 What are the continued challenges for Women in India against time and space? **(2019)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/women-business-and-the-law-2024>

