



EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

As per **PLFS 2023-24**, women's participation in agriculture has increased, but nearly half remain unpaid, **with numbers rising from 23.6 Mn to 59.1 Mn (2017-18 to 2024-25)**.

- ⌘ **Feminisation of Agriculture:** Women make up 42%+ of India's agricultural workforce, a 135% increase in the past decade.
- ⌘ **Regional Concentration:** In states like Bihar & UP, 80%+ women work in agriculture, with more than half unpaid.
- ⌘ **Govt. Support:** Initiatives like Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana, KCCs, & SHGs empower women farmers.

Factors Leading to Feminisation of Agriculture

- ⌘ **Male Out-Migration:** Men migrate to cities or more lucrative rural jobs, leaving women to manage family farms.
- ⌘ **Growth of Contract Farming:** Women are preferred for labor-intensive tasks in sectors like floriculture & plantations due to lower wages.
- ⌘ **Limited Alternative Opportunities:** Lower literacy, restricted mobility & social norms limit women's non-farm employment options, making agriculture more accessible.

Challenges in Women's Progress in Agriculture (Mnemonic: WOMEN)	Suggestions (Mnemonic: GROW)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W - Wage Discrimination: Women earn 20-30% less than men. • O - Omission from Decision-Making: Women are excluded from key agricultural decisions; opinions are often overlooked in Gram Panchayats & farmer cooperatives. • M - Machinery & Tool Mismatch: Farm machinery is designed for men, while women lack access, strength, training, or financial means. • E - Entrenched Domestic Double Burden: Limit women's access to markets, skill development & participation. • N - Negation of Land and Identity Rights: Women own only 13-14% of land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G - Guarantee Market Access: Focus on women-intensive sectors (tea, spices, dairy) in FTAs like the one with US, supporting exports of organic & GI-tagged goods. • R - Resource Rights and Reforms: Promote joint or individual land ownership for women, and scale up women-led FPOs & SHGs. • O - Open Digital Gateways: Scale up platforms like e-NAM and promote digital and financial literacy through BHASHINI & Digital Sakhi. • W - Well-being and Social Support: Provide creche facilities, water supply, and clean energy, while branding women farmers as role models through media campaigns.

PREVENTIVE DETENTION AND NATIONAL SECURITY ACT, 1980

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk was detained under NSA, 1980. He has been leading demonstrations for Ladakh's statehood and Sixth Schedule protections.

NSA, 1980

- ⌘ **Purpose:** Empowers the Centre, states, District Magistrates & Police Commissioners to detain individuals to prevent actions harmful to India's defence, security, public order, or essential supplies.
- ⌘ **Detention Orders:** Function like **arrest warrants**. Detainees can be moved across states and subjected to govt-set conditions.
- ⌘ **Procedural Requirements:** Grounds must be **communicated within 5-15 days**. Detainee can submit a representation.
 - ❖ An Advisory Board must review within 3 weeks. If no sufficient cause, the detainee is released. **Max. detention period- 12 months.**
- ⌘ **Limitations:** No legal representation before the Advisory Board. **Govt. can withhold facts citing "public interest,"**

Preventive Detention

- ✍ **Constitutional Provisions:** **Article 22** permits preventive detention, allowing up to 3 months without Advisory Board approval and longer detention with review by an Advisory Board of HC judges.
- ✍ **Significance:** **Supports Article 355**, which mandates Union protection of states against external aggression & internal disturbances and ensures state govts function according to Constitution.
- ✍ **Key Laws:** NSA, 1980, UAPA, 1967, Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974
- ✍ **SC Rulings:**
 - ♦ **Ameena Begum vs The State of Telangana (2023):** Preventive detention is for emergencies, not routine use.
 - ♦ **Rekha vs State of Tamil Nadu (2011):** Preventive detention is an exception to Article 21.
 - ♦ **Anukul Chandra Pradhan, Advocate v. UOI (1997):** Preventive detention aims to prevent harm to the security of the state, rather than to impose punishment.

INDIA-EFTA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

India's FTA with **EFTA bloc (Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein)**, finalized as **Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA)** in March 2024, came into effect on 1st Oct, 2025.

- ✍ **Market Access:** EFTA provides **100% market access** for India's industrial & non-agricultural products; tariff concessions on processed agricultural products.
- ✍ **Investment & Jobs:** EFTA nations commit **USD 100 billion in investment over 15 years**, creating 1 Mn jobs in India.
- ✍ **Trade Facilitation:** **Dedicated EFTA Desk**, operational since Feb 2025, offers a single-window investment facilitation mechanism for EFTA businesses in India.

India has FTAs with **Japan, Australia, UAE, Mauritius, EFTA, Singapore and Sri Lanka**; India-EU FTA is currently in advanced negotiations.

Concerns with India's FTAs	Suggestions
✍ Trade Deficits: India-ASEAN FTA has led to a significant rise in imports to \$44 Bn in FY23 .	✍ Strengthen Export Competitiveness: Focus on quality, branding, and tech upgrades in manufacturing and agriculture.
✍ Limited Developed Market Access: Non-tariff barriers restrict entry (e.g., Delay in trade agreement with EU due to IPR/data issues).	✍ Diversify Trade Partners: Expand FTAs to emerging markets in Africa, Latin America, and Asia-Pacific.
✍ Small Farmers & MSMEs at Risk: Competition from cheap imports hits vulnerable sectors (e.g., rubber farmers under ASEAN FTA).	✍ Support MSMEs & Startups: Simplify access to credit, logistics, and e-commerce platforms.
✍ Labor & Environmental Clauses: Binding conditions like EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism may hurt Indian exports.	✍ Improve Infrastructure: Expand ports, logistics hubs, freight corridors, and cold chain facilities.
✍ Weak Dispute Resolution: E.g., India-ASEAN disputes on palm oil, machinery tariffs.	✍ Enhance Compliance & Standards: Build capacity for exporters to meet international norms.
	✍ Leverage Digital Trade Platforms: Promote virtual trade shows, e-marketplaces, and online FTA usage.

WASSENAAR ARRANGEMENT

Protests erupted against Microsoft over **allegations that its Azure cloud services supported Israeli military operations in Palestine**, causing civilian harm and highlighting loopholes in Wassenaar Arrangement's export control framework.

Wassenaar Arrangement- Fact Sheet

- ✍ **About:** For exchange of information on transfers of conventional weapons and dual-use goods and technologies
 - ♦ Voluntary export **control regime formally estd. in 1996**
 - ♦ Succeeded the **Cold War-era Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls**
- ✍ **Objective:** Controlling the movement of technology material or components to countries or entities which undermine international security and stability
- ✍ **Members:** 42 members, including India
- ✍ **Secretariat-** Vienna, Austria
- ✍ **WA Plenary:** Decision-making body with representatives from all participating states; Plenary chair rotates annually; India chaired in 2023

Challenges with Wassenaar Arrangement	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outdated Focus on Physical Exports: Designed for hardware, not cloud services or digital technologies. Software as a Service (SaaS), AI & modern software fall into grey areas. Does not cover mass surveillance, profiling, cross-border data, or repression technologies. ● Ambiguity Around Cloud & Remote Access: Traditional rules do not treat remote access, APIs, or admin rights as exports, enabling risky technology transfers. ● Voluntary Nature & Lack of Enforcement: Based on consensus, with inconsistent implementation and enforcement across countries. ● Divergent National Interpretations: Different interpretations create loopholes for defensive research or internal transfers. No standardized system for cross-border licensing. ● Limited Human Rights Consideration: Focus on military use and weapon of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, not civilian harm, surveillance abuse, or discrimination risks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expand Scope of Controlled Technologies: Include cloud infrastructure, AI, surveillance tools, biometric systems, and cross-border data transfers; clearly define benign versus malicious uses; learn from EU dual-use regulations ● Redefine "Export" for Digital Era: Treat remote access, API calls, SaaS, and admin rights as equivalent to physical exports. ● Introduce Binding Rules & Minimum Standards: Implement mandatory licensing, peer review, and shared watchlists of high-risk entities. ● Make Governance Agile and Responsive: Create a technical committee to fast-track updates and address evolving technologies like AI and cyber weapons. ● Integrate Human Rights and Risk Assessment: Consider misuse potential and human rights in licensing decisions, not just military use or WMDs.

CENTENARY OF UNION PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (UPSC)

UPSC marked its centenary on 1st Oct, 2025, completing 100 years since its establishment in 1926, and has played a key role in shaping India's civil services.

- ⌘ An independent constitutional body under **Articles 315–323 Part XIV Chapter II of the Constitution**.
- ⌘ Responsible for recruiting **officers to the All-India Services and Central Civil Services**.
- ⌘ Conducts exams impartially for merit-based selection and recommendations for Group A and Group B Services of the Govt.
- ⌘ **Reforms by UPSC:**
 - ❖ **PRATIBHA Setu Initiative**– A centralized online repository of verified biodata connecting interview-qualified, but not selected, UPSC candidates to alternate employment opportunities in the public and private sectors

Constitutional Provisions Regarding Union Public Service Commission

Article 315	Establishes Public Service Commissions for the Union and States.	Article 316	Defines appointment and term of office for UPSC and UPSC members.
Article 317	Outlines removal and suspension procedures for UPSC and UPSC members.	Article 318	Grants power to regulate service conditions for Commission members and staff.
Article 319	Prohibits members from holding office after their term ends.	Article 320	Specifies the functions of Public Service Commissions.
Article 321	Allows for extending the functions of Public Service Commissions.	Article 322	Covers the removal of Public Service Commissions.
Article 323	Mandates reports from Public Service Commissions.		

PAYMENTS REGULATORY BOARD (PRB)

- RBI has set up a **six-member PRB** to improve oversight and governance of payment systems.
- ⌘ **Composition:** Chaired by RBI Governor, with 2 RBI representatives & 3 Central Government nominees.
 - ❖ **RBI members**– Deputy Governor & Executive Director in charge of Payment and Settlement Systems; RBI's principal legal adviser is a permanent invitee.
 - ⌘ **Predecessor Body:** Replaces **Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems (BPSS)**, a committee of RBI's Central Board.
 - ⌘ **Legal Authority:** Derives powers from the **Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**. Department of PSS reports to PRB.
 - ⌘ **Decision-Making:** Majority vote of members present, with chairperson or deputy governor having a second or casting vote in case of a tie.

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

- India has been re-elected to **Part II of ICAO Council for 2025–28 term**, focusing on strengthening aviation safety, enhancing air connectivity, advancing technology & supporting **ICAO's No Country Left Behind initiative**.
- ⌘ A specialised UN agency; **Est. in 1944** through **Convention on International Civil Aviation in Chicago**; sets global air navigation standards.

- ⌘ 193 member states, **including India (founding member)**.
- ⌘ ICAO Assembly (**organization's sovereign body**) is held every 3 years and elects 36 member Council, divided into:
 - ❖ **Part I:** States of chief importance in air transport (e.g., US, UK, China, Japan).
 - ❖ **Part II:** States contributing most to international air navigation (e.g., India, Germany, Brazil).
 - ❖ **Part III:** States ensuring geographic representation (e.g., Bolivia, Malaysia, Ethiopia).

DESERT 'SOILIFICATION' TECHNOLOGY

Wheat has been successfully **grown for the first time in western Rajasthan's arid desert** using innovative 'desert soilification technology'.

- ⌘ A biotechnological method that **turns barren desert sand into soil capable of supporting agriculture**.
- ⌘ Uses **bioformulations and polymers** to bind loose sand particles, improve soil structure & enhance water retention.
- ⌘ **Key Feature:**
 - ❖ Enhances plant tolerance, making crops (**wheat, bajra, guar gum**) resilient to heat & arid conditions.
 - ❖ **54% higher yields in bajra, guar gum, and chickpea** in bioformulation-amended sand compared to regular soil.
 - ❖ **Reduces irrigation needs** by improving water retention in soil.

